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COM Outlook Fall 2014

College of Osteopathic Medicine

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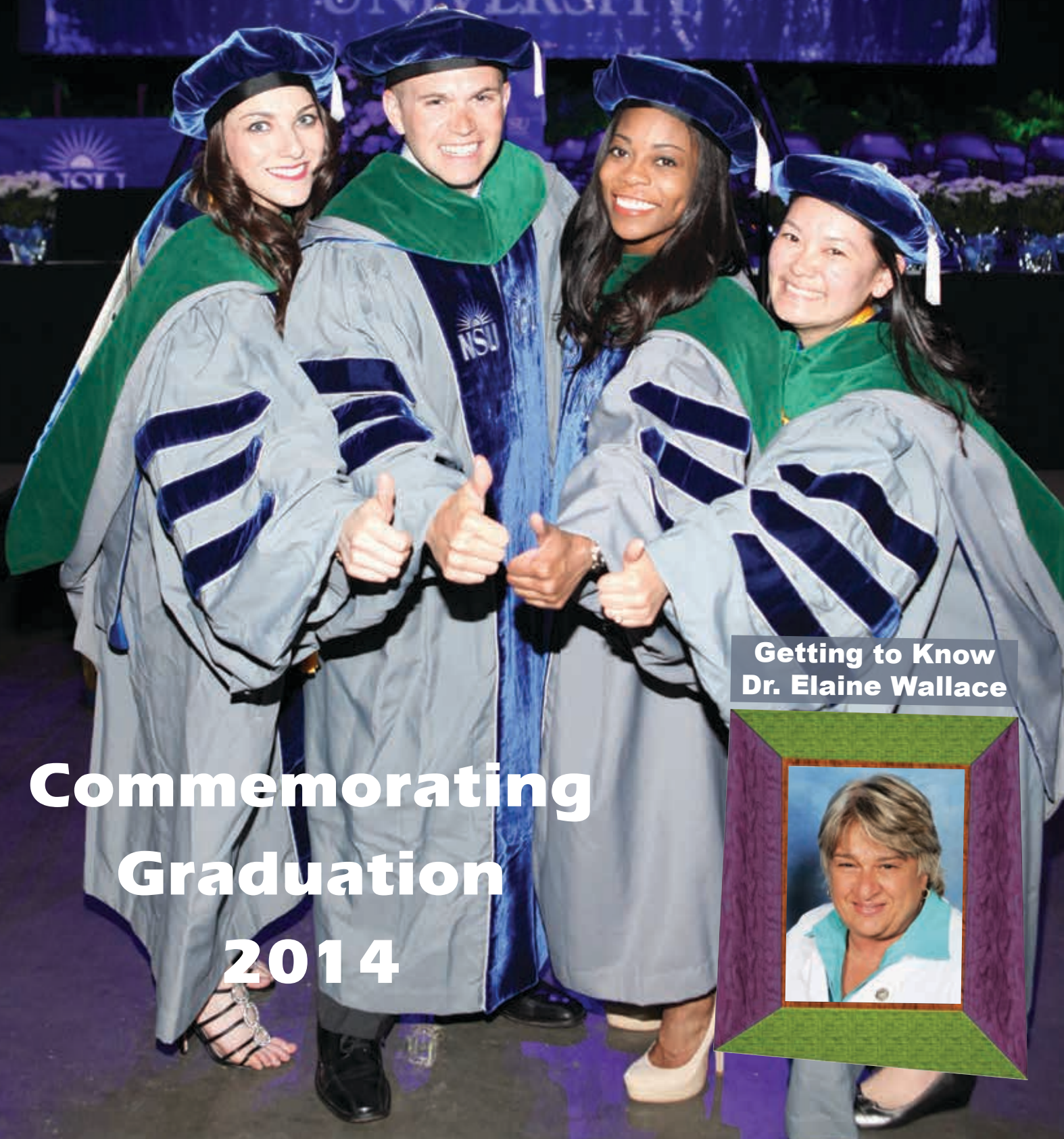
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Summer-Fall 2014

COM Outlook

Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine



**Getting to Know
Dr. Elaine Wallace**

**Commemorating
Graduation
2014**



IN THIS ISSUE...Carisa Champion-Lippmann Wins NSU Student of the Year STUEY...Research Highlights...Medical Outreach in Brazil



Dean's Message

By Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., M.Sc., FACOP dist., FACPP

Throughout the year, I have recognized the achievements of our students and alumni as well as our faculty and staff members. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of NSU and the 35th anniversary of NSU-COM, I would like to commend all those who represent the continuing success of our college.

Due to space constraints, it is impossible for me to name every individual who has made—and continues to make—a contribution to our college, so the following is only a small sampling of our dedicated team's recent achievements.

NSU-COM walked away with two big wins at the 15th Annual NSU Student Life Achievement Awards (STUEYS). **Carisa Champion-Lippmann** was chosen NSU Student of the Year and the **NSU-COM Student Government Association** won for Student Government of the Year. Champion-Lippmann was also elected chair of the national Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents.

Fourth-year student **Britani Kessler** and second-year student **Kelly Thibert** were elected to the American Medical Student Association Board of Trustees for 2014-15, representing nearly 40,000 physicians-in-training. First-year student **Katia Jean Baptiste** won a Terry G. Smith, M.D., Memorial Primary Care Medicine Preceptorship.

Fifteen COM students observed the American Osteopathic Association's annual **D.O. Day** and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine's **COM Day on Capitol Hill** in March and April. Three **NSU-COM Biomedical Informatics Program** students and alumni are among the first group of physicians nationwide to become board certified in clinical informatics.

Dr. Nicole Cook was named as our delegate to the U.S. Pharmacopoeial Convention. **Dr. Doris Newman** became a Fellow of the American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) and was designated president elect of the AAO. **Dr. Howard Neer** received the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians' Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Elaine M. Wallace was featured on the cover of *Leaders Across America* and profiled as an innovator of medical techniques. **Scott Colton** won a Best Feature Story or Article Award from the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.

The **Department of Medical Education's** prominent feature in a news story on the college's use of Second Life garnered national attention when WPLG Local 10 shared the news with syndicated ABC News stations. **Dr. Janet Hamstra** won the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association's (FOMA) Presidential Achievement Award for her dedication to the annual FOMA Poster Competition. This year, 48 of 56 poster entries were from NSU-COM and our associates.

Dr. James T. Howell was honored at the celebration of 125 years of public health in Florida and was recognized as the founding secretary of the newly reestablished Florida Department of Health and for having served three times as Florida's state health officer. **Dr. Nancy Klimas** received the 2014 Perpich Award from the International Association for Chronic Fatigue.

Dr. Joshua D. Lenchus ('00), president of the Jackson Health System medical staff, was named Humanitarian of the Year by the Soref Jewish Community Center. **Dr. Jeffrey S. Grove** ('90) is the immediate past president of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians. **Dr. Gregory James** ('88) is the immediate past president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA), while **Dr. William Stager** ('89) is FOMA's president elect. Clinical faculty member **Dr. Jorge Luna** is FOMA's current president.

I am also grateful for my honors—the Robert A. Kistner Award and becoming a Fellow of the American College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

As we end another academic year as leaders in our profession, I would like to thank everyone, especially the frequently unrecognized heroes who give so much and remain dedicated to building a future that empowers our graduates to offer patients the best quality health care that can be delivered.

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**NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY**
College of Osteopathic Medicine

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The Power of Perseverance: Dr. Jennifer Wellington 44

Some of us know early in our lives the person we want to be. Dr. Jennifer Wellington, a class of 2014 graduate, serves as an example of that special individual who has a dream and resolutely perseveres to realize it.



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HPD Chancellor's Communiqué...Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.



We're at the time of year again when we say goodbye to the many distinguished students who have gained their knowledge and honed their professional skills

while being taught by the dedicated faculty and staff members here at NSU's Health Professions Division (HPD).

For me, graduation season often brings back memories of the HPD's founder, Dr. Morton Terry, whose vision and understanding of what the future of health care would entail both impressed and inspired me. He realized that truly effective health care required both the understanding and willingness of the general public to accept the precepts of wellness and prevention, as well as gain respect for all the health care professionals involved in their care. In fact, it was these concepts that led to the establishment of the Health Professions Division.

When Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine was established in 1979, Dr. Terry's goal was not to create a medical school that would become the 800-pound gorilla; it was to have it serve as a shining example to the other health professions of respect and professionalism as we added additional schools prior to the merger in 1994 with Nova University.

Because of the evolution that has occurred in my 28 years with this institution, I really view graduation as a point in time that is a bit sad because it represents the last time I will see many of the bright, eager faces I've gotten to know over the years. That's why I always have this to say to the parents during my comments at the graduation dinner banquet: "You'll have to excuse me for feeling a bit melancholy because these students

have been part of my family for a long time. They're like children to me, so when I see them leave, it's bittersweet."

Graduation, however, also brings to mind the fact that we have a whole new group of students coming into the Health Professions Division each summer after our graduates depart. The beauty of Nova Southeastern University is seeing all the new faces and the essence of what this nation is really all about—multiple ethnic groups, races, genders, styles, issues, and relationships.

I recently had a conversation with several of our HPD deans, who shared their thoughts regarding what an incredible value system we have here and how this has allowed us to establish an esteemed reputation throughout the United States. This is reflected in the quality students we are attracting, who truly have a desire to be enrolled in our programs. It also speaks to the dedication and compassion of our faculty and staff members, who truly care about the students.

I believe very strongly that the individuals our students come into contact with daily at NSU's Health Professions Division—from those staffing the reception desks within each of our seven schools to the various support people, all play an integral role in enhancing our reputation. If they convey to our students the traits of being courteous, respectful, and gracious, then we've done our job.

Academic achievement is a noble attribute, but I don't think we want to measure our quality simply by this one standard of excellence. We want to say, "This is a good human being." That's why I feel a bit melancholic as I watch our new graduates leave. But in the same sense, there's happiness and a state of jubilation in seeing all the bright new faces begin their professional journeys a few months later.

When you recognize that over 800 graduates walked across the stage at the HPD graduation ceremony on May 18—and

that over 95 percent of them were here from their very first day of class—it makes you feel proud because that's a remarkable retention rate. It also relates not only to our graduates' capabilities, but also to the fact that the eight NSU core values our president, Dr. George Hanbury, always talks about are not just words on a page but are instead an outcomes-based reality.

During the past few months, I met with several class presidents from our colleges. I told them I possessed a "Chipsonian" personality, to which one of the students quizzically asked, "What do you mean?" They had never seen the movie *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, which is about a headmaster at a school who would get out of his office and walk the hallways during class breaks and recesses just to talk to the students.

I usually find myself doing this once or twice a day because our students are extremely responsive and communicative. In general, people hear about the so-called ills and warts that are voiced at the university's various town hall meetings and in similar venues. But the reality is that an overwhelming number of our students feel respected, nurtured—and embraced.



Carisa Champion-Lippmann Snares STUEY Win as NSU Student of the Year



The College of Osteopathic Medicine walked away with three wins at the 15th Annual NSU Student Life Achievement Awards (STUEYS) held April 2 in the Miniaci Performing Arts Center on campus, including the most coveted award of the night: NSU Student of the Year for the indefatigable OMS-III **Carisa Champion-Lippmann**.

In addition to Champion-Lippmann's significant triumph, the **NSU-COM Student Government Association** was the recipient of the university's Student Government of the Year STUEY, while **John the Baker**, which was nominated by NSU-COM's Student Government Association, was named Corporate Partner of the Year.

For those who are unfamiliar with the STUEY Awards, the event was created in 2000 to honor the people and organizations that best exemplify the core values of academic excellence,

student centered, opportunity, scholarship/research, integrity, diversity, innovation, and community within the university community.

Excerpts from Champion-Lippmann's nomination entry clearly illustrate why she was selected as NSU's Student of the Year.

"As a four-year member of the SGA Executive Board, student doctor Carisa Champion-Lippmann proves more than capable of handling the daunting tasks of managing her personal life and her academic career. In fact, her record of the highest-ever recorded commitment to community service—around 700 hours—has helped both the NSU community and neighborhoods in need across the world.

Under her leadership, the NSU-COM SGA thrived in advocating for students and their interests. Carisa worked on many important causes, which

included heading up the graduation resolution that helped accommodate the students' schedules. She also helped to orchestrate and design the HPD Student Lounge renovation and other projects central to student life.

Her efforts and successes as a leader include serving as PanSGA HPD Committee chair, a President's 64 member, Omega Beta Iota Political Action Honor Society national director, NSU's Relay for Life Education Subcommittee member, and A Day for Children graduate student director. Carisa also serves on multiple American Osteopathic Association state and national boards and committees as the one student representative for all osteopathic medical students and the COSGP Executive Board.

Carisa lives NSU's core value of innovation as she helped create NSU's D.O./J.D. pilot program and is its inaugural student. She is now the first person in the world to pursue D.O., J.D., and M.P.H. degrees at the same time. She excels at juggling each program, performing at the top in her classes in all three disciplines. In addition, her passion for the underserved prompted her to establish a student-led free clinic for the Broward County homeless."

Other nominees representing NSU-COM with distinction were

Executive of the Year

Margaret Wilkinson, Ph.D.

Alumni of the Year

Kenneth Johnson, D.O.

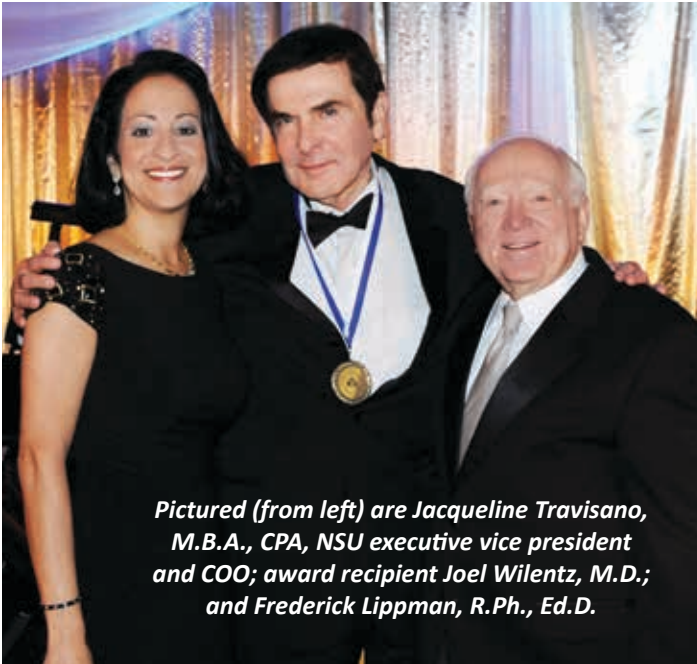
Staff Person of the Year

Donna Chase, M.B.A.

Co-Curricular Adviser of the Year

Doris Newman, D.O.

Bal Fantastique Raises Funds to Support NSU's Health Professions Division



Pictured (from left) are Jacqueline Travisano, M.B.A., CPA, NSU executive vice president and COO; award recipient Joel Wilentz, M.D.; and Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.

On March 29, more than 325 community leaders, philanthropists, and NSU faculty members, students, and administrators attended the Health Professions Division's 29th Annual Bal Fantastique at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale.

Over the years, the black-tie event has raised a significant sum of money that helps support educational and community programs in areas such as medicine, optometry, pharmacy, dental medicine, health care sciences, nursing, and medical sciences. In addition, HPD Board of Governors' member and dermatologist Joel Wilentz, M.D., was honored with the HPD Distinguished Service Award for his numerous contributions to the health care field and NSU in particular.

"It is my pleasure to honor Dr. Wilentz for his continued service and dedication to helping us educate and develop the

next generation of health care practitioners," said Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D., HPD chancellor. "As Nova Southeastern University continues to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year, it is fitting that we recognize an individual who has helped us get to where we are today and is helping us pave the path to our future."

Funds raised from the Bal Fantastique support programs both within the classroom and in practical settings. In an effort to provide a well-rounded and community-focused educational experience, HPD students have the opportunity to participate in medical outreach trips to the Caribbean, South America, and Asia, see patients at NSU's Health Care Centers, and volunteer their time at numerous free health fairs the university holds for the public.



All seven HPD deans were in attendance at this year's Bal Fantastique. Pictured (from left) are Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni (Osteopathic Medicine), Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P. (Dental Medicine), Irv Rosenbaum, D.P.A., Ed.D., M.P.A., HPD executive dean for administration, Stanley H. Wilson, Ed.D., PT, CEAS (Health Care Sciences), Marcella M. Rutherford, Ph.D., M.B.A., M.S.N. (Nursing), Lisa Deziel, Ph.D., Pharm.D. (Pharmacy), David S. Loshin, O.D., Ph.D., FAAO (Optometry), and Harold E. Laubach, Ph.D., M.S. (Medical Sciences).

New...Noteworthy



On June 4, the college's **Project HOPE** (Homelessness in Osteopathic Predoctoral Education program) was the subject of

a report by WPLG-MIA (ABC) – Local 10 News. In the broadcast, OMS-IV Aaron Fisher shared his experience about providing health care to the homeless at Camillus Health Concern in Miami, Florida.



Larkin Community Hospital, which is a member of the college's Consortium

for Excellence in Medical Education, has been chosen as one of the five organizations selected nationwide to participate in the National Center for Trauma Informed Care (NCTIC) initiative sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration. The program aims at successful implementation of trauma-informed practices in government

organizations, hospital health systems, and service systems. Larkin was the only hospital in Florida to incorporate the program's principles hospital-wide in 2012-13 and was selected due to its continuing success in incorporating trauma-informed principles.

According to **MedScapes's 2014 Physician Compensation Report**, most specialties reported income increases ranging from modest to significant. Rheumatology showed the highest annual increase at 15 percent, while nephrology had the largest decline at 8 percent. Orthopedics topped the list at \$413,000, followed by cardiology (\$351,000), urology (\$348,000), and gastroenterology

NSU-COM Donors Honored at Big Thank You Luncheon



Pictured (from left) are Summer Jones, Marie Morris, and Earl Gerald Carlos.

NSU's **Third Annual Big Thank You Scholarship Luncheon**, which was held on March 24 in the Don Taft University Center Arena, provides NSU administrators and students an opportunity to honor scholarship donors who continually make a difference in the students' lives.

OMS-III Diondra Burney (pictured below with Dr. Silvagni) received the *Beth and Joel L. Rush, D.O., Endowed Scholarship*, which is accompanied by a \$1,000 cash award and is provided to NSU-COM students who are in good academic standing and are in extreme and/or urgent financial need at any juncture during their NSU-COM education.



OMS-III Summer Jones received the *Morton Morris Public Health Endowment Scholarship*, which is accompanied by a \$1,000 cash allocation, while **OMS-II Earl Gerald Carlos** received the *Judy Morris Endowment Memorial Scholarship*, which

is accompanied by a \$500 cash award. Both public health scholarships are provided due to the generosity of Marie Morris—the widow of Morton Morris, D.O., J.D., FAOAO, who served as executive dean for professional affairs at the NSU Health Professions Division prior to his death in May 2008. To be eligible for the scholarship, nominees must be NSU-COM students or have already achieved their D.O. degree, showcase high academic achievement, be currently enrolled in the college's Master of Public Health Program, and demonstrate financial need.

Katia Jean Baptiste Honored with Humana Award



Pictured are Jill Sumfest, M.D., Humana vice president; Delfina Wilson, Ph.D., director of student services; Katia Jean Baptiste; Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni; Dianna Silvagni, J.D., clinical assistant professor of medical education; and Stephanie Petrosky, M.H.A., RD, director of administrative services.

OMS-I Katia Jean Baptiste is one of three South Florida medical students who received a paid summer preceptorship at a Humana-owned primary care medical center. Humana presented the Terry G. Smith, M.D., Memorial Primary Care Medicine Preceptorships at a reception held March 26 at Florida International University in Miami.

Jean Baptiste, who was chosen based on recommendations and her interest in primary-care medicine, will complete a four- to six-week paid summer preceptorship at a Humana-owned primary care medical center in South Florida.

(\$348,000). The bottom-earning specialties in the 2014 survey were HIV/infectious disease (\$174,000), family medicine (\$176,000), and pediatrics (\$181,000).



Largo Medical Center, which is a member of NSU-COM's Consortium for Excellence in Medical

Education, received approval in March to offer one of the most highly specialized adult kidney transplant programs on Florida's West Coast. The program will serve the state's

Transplantation Area 2, which comprises 13 counties and is expected to be operational in 2015. Largo Medical Center is one of only eight hospitals statewide approved to provide kidney transplant services. In addition, Largo will expand access to emergency care in Clearwater in the fall of 2014 with the opening of a freestanding emergency department in central Pinellas County called Clearwater ER.

As part of its outreach efforts for National Osteopathic Medicine Week, the college's **Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA)** chapter hosted ShaDO Day on April 17. As part of the festivities, 30 undergraduate students from various schools, including some



from NSU's Pre-Medical Society and Pre-SOMA, were invited to attend classes and participate in various activities with the NSU-COM students. Activities included a vitals workshop in the Simulation Lab, attending the OMM Lab, and having lunch with the college's inimitable dean, Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni.

NSU-COM Commemorates NSU's 50th Anniversary with Tour, Exhibits, and Reception

In April, NSU-COM proudly joined Nova Southeastern University's 50th anniversary celebration by offering a week of planned events in true collegial fashion. Activities coordinated by the 50th Anniversary Taskforce provided several interactive activities showcasing the history and success of the college.

The celebration and open house initiated with tours and hands-on demonstrations of the medical simulation laboratory for NSU faculty and staff members. The Terry Atrium—bustling at midday when foot traffic peaks—was filled with a large exhibition displaying unique contributions such as research, educational materials, clinical services, program attributes, and accomplishments hosted by NSU-COM centers and departments. Participants received small gifts and helpful information along with friendly greetings and refreshments in the high-energy venue.

Among the events was an evening reception to honor the employees of NSU-COM, which was

highlighted by a special award being presented to those individuals who have been with the college since its merger with Nova University in 1994. The week's festivities culminated with NSU-COM hosting "Coffee and Conversation" in the Alvin Sherman Library, which included an impressive display of archives and memorabilia. The personal reflections of select members of the faculty and student body on the positive contributions the college has made to NSU, the community, and the legacy of osteopathic medicine were exhibited at the gathering and added to the enjoyment of the morning.

Although many individuals contributed to the success of the weeklong commemoration, special thanks are extended to the college's 50th Anniversary Taskforce members: Hilda De Gaetano D.O., FAAP, FACOP; Johneta Goodwin; Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG; Stephanie Petrosky, M.H.A., RD; Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., RD; and Mark Sandhouse, D.O., M.S.





Student Awards Ceremony Celebrates Success

On May 9, a number of awards and scholarships were presented to both students and faculty members at the annual OMS-I and II Student Awards Ceremony. Students were honored in areas such as research, academic excellence, and community service, while several faculty members were presented with Golden Apple Awards for their outstanding teaching abilities.

Azad, Martinez Receive Dr. Matthew Terry Scholarships



OMS-I Hasan Azad and OMS-II Zophia Martinez were the recipients of the Dr. Matthew A. Terry Scholarship Endowment. The academic accolade, which is accompanied by a \$500 cash award, was established in 1999 to honor first- and second-year medical students who

epitomize virtues such as scholastic excellence, service to the school, empathy, and congeniality. The Dr. Matthew A. Terry Scholarship Endowment, which was the brainchild of the Department of Family Medicine, serves as a fitting tribute to NSU-COM students who embody the true spirit of an osteopathic practitioner. *(Pictured are Hasan Azad and Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni, NSU-COM dean.)*

Student Trio Wins Dr. Bradley I. Silverman Scholarship



OMS-II Paul Malczak, OMS-II Kruti Yagnik, and OMS-I Angela Kim were the recipients of the Eighth Annual Dr. Bradley I. Silverman Memorial Scholarship, which was established in 2006 to honor outstanding NSU-COM students who participate in cancer-related community service and showcase compassion, commitment, and other laudable traits exemplified by Dr. Silverman. In addition to earning well-deserved recognition, the award-ees each received \$1,500 cash awards. *(Pictured (from left) are Paul Malczak, Marilyn and Stanley Silverman, Angela Kim, and Kruti Yagnik.)*

Drs. Boesler and Sprague Earn Golden Apple Awards



David Boesler, D.O., M.S. (left), associate professor and chair of the Department of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine, and Peter A. Sprague, D.P.T., PT, OCS (right), assistant professor of osteopathic principles and practice in the Department of Sports Medicine, were the recipients of this year's Golden Apple Awards for their outstanding teaching skills. Dr. Boesler received his award from the class of 2017, while Dr. Sprague was honored by the class of 2016. *(Pictured are Dr. Boesler with OMS-I Marco Casanova and Dr. Sprague with OMS-II Chelsea Wells.)*

Griswold Receives Klein Academicall Society Endowment Scholarship



OMS-I Ashley Griswold was the recipient of the Robert Klein Academicall Society Endowment Scholarship, which is an annual scholarship accompanied by a \$1,500 award. To be eligible, nominees must be an NSU-COM student in good standing, be actively involved in the Klein Academicall

Society, and submit an application and essay. The award is named after former NSU-COM faculty member Robert Klein, D.O., who passed away in October 2004. *(Pictured are Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, associate professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and OMS-I Ashley Griswold.)*

Four Students Honored with Burnell Research Awards



Four NSU-COM students—**OMS-II Naveen Dhawan**, **OMS-III Logan Huff**, **OMS-II Magui Mikhail**, and **OMS-III Steven Fan Zhang**—were named the winners of the Dr. Kenneth Burnell Student Research Awards, which are presented to NSU-COM students who conduct outstanding research in either clinical medicine or biomedical science.

The scholarship was established in 2001 through an endowed gift from the late Dr. Burnell to stimulate student research at NSU-COM. This year, more students participated in the program than ever before. In addition, the quality of the submissions resulted in the college presenting cash awards to a record number of individuals. All students received credit on their NSU-COM transcripts for having completed a course in research and a \$500 cash award. *(Pictured (from left) are Naveen Dhawan, Magui Mikhail, Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., RD, assistant dean for education, planning, and research, Steven Fan Zhang, and Logan Huff.)*

Peer Mentors Garner Attention



Ten conscientious second-year students were honored for their contributions to their individual **academical societies** *(listed in italics)* as well as their commitment

to fellow society members. They are as follows: **Lloyd Petty** (*William G. Anderson, D.O.*), **Nicole Shovlin** (*Louisa Burns, D.O.*); **Victoria Comeau** (*Robert Klein, D.O.*); **Sabrina Melekson** (*Fred Lippman, Ed.D.*); **Nikita Donti** (*Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.*); **Ricky Patel** (*Bradley I. Silverman, D.O.*); **Rebecca Drucker** (*A.T. Still, M.D., D.O.*); **Rita Zeidan** (*Morton Terry, D.O.*); **Amanda Jurvis** (*James Turner, D.O.*); and **Michael Haynes** (*Ross Zafonte, D.O.*). In addition, Jasmine Nebhrajani and Justin Nippert received peer executive awards.

All winners are nominated by their peers as being supportive and involved society members who exemplify the attitudes regarding COM participation, community service, and professionalism within their society. The honor is accompanied by a \$1,500 cash award for each winner. *Pictured (left bottom photo) are Jasmine Nebhrajani, Nikita Donti, Nicole Shovlin, and Victoria Comeau.*

TOUCH Community Service Awards



Fifty-five students were honored with **TOUCH Community Service Awards** for their extensive community service work during their first or second years at NSU-COM. These humanistic individuals were honored for their hard work and dedication toward improving the NSU, local, national, and international communities.

The awards, which are divided into platinum, gold, and silver categories, are based on the following criteria: The platinum honor is presented to the student that logged the greatest number of TOUCH community service hours in the current academic year. Gold status is granted to applicants that logged at least 110 TOUCH community service hours, while silver status is accorded to applicants that logged at least 60 hours. Below are the TOUCH honorees in the platinum and gold categories:

Platinum: Dustin Benyo (OMS-I). **Gold:** Kristi Ray and Tiffany Crider (OMS-Is); Amy Williams, Nhi-Kieu Nguyen, Christopher Scholten, Chelsea Wells, David Kim, Mariam Viqar, Richard Fong, Nicole Shovlin, Lloyd Petty, and Tyler Gombash (OMS-IIs); and Konstantin Alekseyenko and Aleksey Alekseyenko (OMS-IIIs).



Choosing to become a medical professional most likely stems from a desire to help fellow citizens, save lives, and make a difference in the world. When aspiring physicians go to medical school, more often than not they are solely focused on learning how to physically practice medicine; that is, consulting with patients, diagnosing illnesses, and prescribing treatment.

Fred Segal is a health law attorney in the Miami office of the law firm Broad and Cassel and is a graduate of NSU's Shepard Broad Law Center.

HEALTH CARE LEGAL EAGLE

The Importance of Coding

By Fred Segal, Esq.



While they may not have imagined it, physicians begin to realize very quickly into their medical career that they have to oversee certain administrative functions related to their practice of medicine that are neither fun nor exciting. Most of these administrative functions, however, are essential for maintaining a successful physician practice. Carelessness in the performance of such tasks could subject a physician to a suspension or loss of his or her medical license.

Medical coding, for example, is one of the most important administrative functions a physician will face. In most instances, the majority of a physician's services are reimbursed by a third party payor, such as an insurance company or a government-funded program like Medicare. Medical coding, generally, is the process taking a physician's documentation of the services he or she performs and matching it to a specific clinical code. This process is performed by a medical coding professional, who then creates a *claim* for payment that is presented to a payor.

Proper coding depends on the medical professional to assign the appropriate code to a procedure performed, as well as the physician to accurately document the procedure performed. Some of the more common coding violations are *upcoding* (assigning a code for a similar but different procedure that pays a higher reimbursement) and *unbundling* (coding a procedure as a single service when such procedure should be treated as part of another bigger procedure).

Inaccurate coding can create numerous problems for a physician and his or her practice. If a private payor (e.g., a health insurance provider) finds inaccuracies in the claim for payment, it may deny payment, and the physician or his or her practice will have to

go through the headache of appealing the insurer's decision.

In addition, inaccurate or false information on a claim for payment to a government benefits program (e.g., Medicare/Medicaid) could subject a physician to extremely harsh penalties. First, the government program may treat the inaccurate claim as an overpayment and demand a refund of the amounts received. Also, if it believes it can prove that a physician intended for a government payment to be made from a claim that was falsely coded, the United States Department of Justice could bring charges against the physician, which could result in prison time, or the Office of Inspector General can bring a lawsuit against the physician and his or her practice that could result in exorbitant fines.

A wise man once said, "What you put in with the pen you can't take out with the sword." Everything a physician writes down, or everything that is sent out on his or her behalf, must be accounted for and be accurate. If not, major problems could be on the horizon.



Research/Scholarly Activity - Faculty and Student Achievements



OMS-III Carisa Champi-on-Lippmann, who is also pursuing a J.D. degree at NSU's Shepa-

rd Broad Law Center, was part of a team that won first place as the overall champion at the L. Edward Bryant, Jr., National Health Law Transactional Competition held March 21 at Loyola University School of Law in Chicago, Illinois. The competition required the team to advise the physician owners of a specialty hospital about their options for the future, taking into account complex legal and business considerations. In May, she was recognized for her outstanding accomplishments by the Florida State University (FSU) Alumni Association, which honored her with the Reubin O'D.

Askew Young Alumni Award. Champion-Lippmann, a 2008 FSU alumna, received double accolades from the association by winning a Thirty Under 30 Award—highlighting the accomplishments of 30 of FSU's outstanding young alumni who are age 30 or younger. Then—from that already impressive group—she was one of six chosen to receive the coveted Askew Award—the highest honor bestowed upon young alumni by the FSU Alumni Association. The Askew Award is named in honor of the late Reubin O'D. Askew, who started his political career at FSU as student body president before going on to become one of America's most respected governors from 1971-79.

Douglas Flemons, Ph.D., LMFT, professor of family therapy, clinical professor of family medicine, and co-director of NSU's Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention, recently coauthored a book entitled



Relational Suicide Assessment: Risks, Resources, and Possibilities for Safety. He

also presented a workshop on the topic at the annual conference of the American Association of Suicidology held April 9-12 in Los Angeles, California.



Mark Gabay, D.O., FAAP, FACOP, assistant professor of pediatrics, served as one of the

moderators for the 17th Annual Pediatric Board Review Course hosted by Miami Children's Hospital that took place May 15-18 in Miami Beach. In addition, Dr. Gabay played a key role in the development of the inaugural Internet-based nationwide pediatrics residency in-service examination in with the American Osteopathic Board of Pediatrics that is entering its second year of administration in August 2014.



OMS-IV Andrew R. Garrett, M.S., had his coauthored article entitled "A Novel Method for

Predicting Antioxidant Activity Based on Amino Acid Structure" published in *Food Chemistry*.



OMS-III Britta Gray (pictured left), **Andrew Garrett**, and **Samantha Berr** present-

ed a poster entitled "A Survey of Medical School Curricula Addressing Interprofessionalism and the Health Care Needs of Individuals Experiencing

Homelessness" at the 2014 National Health Care for the Homeless Conference and Policy Symposium held May 28-30 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The poster summarized the results of a student-led research project in collaboration with NSU-COM's Project HOPE.

Elliot Sklar, Ph.D., and **Kristi Messer, M.P.H., M.S.W.**, served as faculty advisers.



T. Lucas Hollar, Ph.D., assistant professor of public health, authored "Healthcare

Spending and Prevention Within the Affordable Care Act: Contrasting Public Health and Medical Models of Prevention," which is a chapter in a book entitled *The American Election 2012: Contexts and Consequences*. Dr. Hollar was also invited to serve as a peer reviewer for the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* and was appointed to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Council of Osteopathic Researchers.



Robin J. Jacobs, Ph.D., M.S.W., director of international medicine, presented a

lecture coauthored with **Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S.**, NSU-COM's executive associate dean, entitled, "Identification of Musculoskeletal Disorders in Medically Underserved Regions of Rural Vietnam" at the Second International Conference on Health and Medical Sciences held May 6 in Athens, Greece. She also authored "Charity and Competence of Charitable Gift Givers," which was published in the May edition of the *Journal of Religion*

& Spirituality in Social Work, and "Social Media in Pharmacy: Analysis of Pharmacists' Use of Twitter" in the April edition of the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*.



OMS-IV Britani Kessler (pictured left) and **OMS-II Kelly Thibert** were elected to the Ameri-

can Medical Student Association (AMSA) Board of Trustees for 2014-15. Kessler became national president on May 1, while Thibert assumed the vice president for internal affairs position. As board officers, they are representing nearly 40,000 physicians-in-training, maintain alliances with other organizations, and visit AMSA chapters across the country.



Nancy Klimas, M.D., professor of internal medicine and director of NSU-COM's

Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine, was featured on Oprah Winfrey's Web site *Oprah.com* in an article entitled "Not Feeling Well? This Could Be Why" that discussed the symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome.



OMS-IV Milla Kviatkovsky, who presented her case report entitled "The Bloody

Aortic Stenosis: A Case of Heyde Syndrome" at the national American College of Physicians Internal Medicine Meeting held April 10-12 in Orlando, Florida, also received first-place honors in the symposium's Medical Student Clinical Vignette Competition.

Research/Scholarly Activity – Faculty and Student Achievements



Linda Maurice, M.A., director of the Lifelong Learning Institute, recently completed

her master's degree in cross-disciplinary studies at the NSU Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences. At the American Society on Aging's Annual Aging in America Conference held March 11-15 in San Diego, California, she presented a roundtable discussion entitled "It's Not Your Grandparents' Retirement—The New Reality of 'Mature' Adults."



Heather C. McCarthy, D.O., assistant professor of medical education and osteo-

pathic principles and practice, director of the Simulation/Standardized Patient Lab, and a faculty member of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners, recently participated in the Level 2 Final Exam Review meeting held June 16-17 in Chicago, Illinois. In July, she was involved with the key validation of items for the COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE.



Mariana Morris, Ph.D., professor and director of Gulf War research at NSU-COM's

Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine, was recently appointed to the review panel for the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Research Mentoring Network. The network is a new and important initiative from the NIH Common Fund's "Enhancing Diversity in the NIH-Funded Workforce" program aimed

at supporting innovative and transformative approaches to increase the diversity of the biomedical workforce.



Deborah A. Mulligan, M.D., FAAP, FACEP, director of NSU's Institute for Child Health

Policy and clinical professor of pediatrics, spoke at the American Academy of Pediatrics Annual Leadership Forum held March 13-16 in Chicago, Illinois. The forum was attended by 250 executive leaders who support the Human Trafficking Education as a Component of Medical Education and Pediatric Training Resolution.



Doris Newman, D.O., FFAO, associate professor of osteopathic principles and practice

and director of the Department of Rural and Urban Underserved Medicine, successfully completed all the requirements to become a Fellow of the American Academy of Osteopathy (FAAO). This honor, which makes her the 81st living FAAO, was conferred during the AAO's Convocation held March 19-23 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She also presented a two-day pre-convocation workshop for the AAO entitled "The Osteopathic Approach to Common ENT Complaints in Children," was invited to judge the Louisa Burns Osteopathic Research Poster Competition, and was designated as president elect of the AAO.

OMS-III Andrea Palestro presented a case report entitled "Dying to Be Thin: Superior Mesenteric Artery Syndrome



Caused by Adolescent Anorexia Nervosa" as a research poster presentation at

the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians Spring Conference held April 25-27 in Kansas City, Missouri.



OMS-III Alexandros Pappas presented his research poster entitled

"Success of Intraocular Pressure Control in Glaucoma Patients Undergoing Canaloplasty with and Without Cataract Extraction in a Single Center Setting" at the Association for Research and Vision in Ophthalmology (ARVO) Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida on May 6. He was awarded the ARVO/Vision Research Minority Fellowship Award and Travel Grant to present at the meeting.



OMS-III Elizabeth Potter was selected as the East Florida Physicians Alliance Scholar,

which came with a \$2,500 scholarship for her to attend the 66th American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Annual Meeting on April 26 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Potter was selected because of her educational goals, leadership skills, and academic potential. She also was among a hand-picked group of individuals who were invited to attend the AAN's Women in Leadership course.

Arif M. Rana, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.S., assistant professor of biomedical informatics and medical education, coau-



thored a response article entitled "Serious Arabic Meaning, Grammatical, and Study

Design Flaws in the study "Faxed Arabic Prescriptions: A Medication Error Waiting to Happen?" with **Raed H. AlHazme, M.S.B.I.** ('12) and a College of Pharmacy student that was published in the June issue of the *International Journal of Medical Informatics*. Dr. Rana also received his Master of Science degree in Medical Education from NSU's Abraham S. Fischler School of Education in May.



Robin I. Shecter, D.O., FACOD, clinical assistant professor of dermatology and residency director at West Palm

Hospital in West Palm Beach, Florida, has created a new and innovative children's cotton candy-scented sunscreen gel named Lickady-Split. Fueled by the need for a safe and protective product that kids will want to use, Dr. Shecter spent two years developing the product with a chemist.



Peter A. Sprague, D.P.T., PT, OCS, assistant professor of osteopathic principles

and practice in the Department of Sports Medicine, authored a paper entitled "Changes in Functional Movement Screen Scores Over a Season in Collegiate Soccer and Volleyball Athletes" that was published in the June edition of the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*.



Gabriel Suci, Ph.D., M.S.P.H., associate professor of public health, coauthored

an article with a number of NSU-COM alumni and residents entitled "Wikipedia Vs. Peer-Reviewed Medical Literature for Information About the 10 Most Costly Medical Conditions" in the May issue of the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*.



Elliot Sklar, Ph.D., M.S., director of Project HOPE (Homelessness in Osteopathic

Predoctoral Education), **Kristi Messer, M.S.W., M.P.H.**, executive director of Project HOPE, and **Nadine Chipon-Schoepp, D.O.**, assistant professor of family medicine, presented "Chronic Disease Management Strategies in Persons Experiencing Homelessness for Student Providers" at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference and Policy Symposium held May 28-30 in New Orleans, Louisiana.



OMS-II Khasim Syed presented his poster entitled "Impaired Akt Phosphory-

lation in Response to High Insulin in Human RPE Cells" at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Annual Meeting on May 4 in Orlando, Florida.

Drs. Marriott, Thomas-Purcell Receive Kenyon Cancer Research Grant



Oneka B. Marriott, D.O., M.P.H., assistant professor of pediatrics and public health and assistant director of medical education for the NSU-COM/Palm Beach County Health Department Preventive Medicine Residency Program, and **Kamilah B. Thomas-Purcell, Ph.D., M.P.H., CHES**, director of the Interprofessional Primary Care Education Program and assistant professor of public health, received the 2014-15 NSU-COM Kenyon Cancer Research Grant.

Dr. Marriott will conduct a study entitled "Situational Analysis and Needs Assessment in Children's Cancer in Rwanda," while Dr. Thomas-Purcell will assess "Grenadian Women's Perspectives on Screening for Breast and Cervical Cancer."

Since 2001, NSU-COM has offered the Kenyon Cancer Research Grant, which is

provided by an endowment created by the late Franklin Kenyon and Frances Kenyon Agneski. The program helps support faculty members who engage in primary care cancer-related research with an award of up to \$15,000 for one year.

Dr. Thomas-Purcell also received a \$5,000 grant from the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine to conduct a study with **Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H.** and **T.M., FACOP**, director of the college's Master of Public Health Program, entitled "Interprofessional Education: Impact of M.P.H. training on D.O. Interprofessional Collaboration."

Pictured (above from left) are Dr. Thomas-Purcell, Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., associate dean for education, planning, and research, and Dr. Marriott.

Faculty Members Receive President's, QOF Grants

On May 13, a number of NSU-COM faculty members, in collaboration with other NSU faculty researchers, were awarded cash endowments in the university's 15th Annual President's Faculty Research and Development Grant (PFRDG) and 12th Annual Quality of Life Awards ceremony.

During the event, 39 research projects received PFRDG awards up to \$10,000 each for fiscal year 2015. The ceremony also served to recognize the dedication and innovation of the 56 faculty members and 54 students from the 13 academic units that submitted a total of 65 PFRDG proposals. *Please note that although other NSU faculty members and students were involved in several of the award-winning projects listed below, only NSU-COM participants are listed.* Following are the projects that feature NSU-COM participation:

President's Faculty Research and Development Grants

"Explorative Gene Expression and Pathway Analysis for Innovative Cancer Treatment" - **Lubov Nathanson, Ph.D.**, and **Paula Waziry, Ph.D.**

"Epigenetic Modulation of Viral Infection: Role of DNA Methylation in Recovery" - **Paula Waziry, Ph.D.**, and **Lubov Nathanson, Ph.D.**

"A Novel Immune Fingerprint for mTBI Diagnosis and Recovery Prognosis" - **Travis Craddock, Ph.D.**, **Mary Ann Fletcher, Ph.D.**, and **Stephen Russo, Ph.D.**

"Effect of Baseline Platelet Count on Healing After Platelet-Rich Plasma Injection" - **Melissa Tabor, D.O.**, and **Logan Huff (OMS-III)**

"Port Everglades Inlet Microbiome Analysis Using High-Throughput DNA Sequencing" - **Jay Fleisher, Ph.D.**

"Detailed Molecular Profiling of Sporadic Stage I Breast Cancer" - **Stephen Grant, Ph.D.**

"Effects of Type 2 Diabetes on Antiretroviral Adherence in Older Adults with HIV" - **Robin Jacobs, Ph.D.**

Quality of Life Grant

"Community Gardens for Special Needs and Nursing Home Communities" - **Elizabeth Hames, D.O.**, and **Kristi Ray (OMS-I)**

Faculty/Staff Focus - Activities, Achievements, and Awards (Non Research)



Scott Colton, B.A., APR, COM/HPD director of medical communications and public

relations, received a Best Feature Story or Article Award in the AACOM Communications Awards Competition held during the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Annual Conference, which took place April 2-5 in Washington, D.C.

nonprofit organization that is the official pharmacopeia of the United States.



Marie Florent-Carre, D.O., M.P.H., assistant professor of family medicine, joined

NSU-COM in May. A 2004 alumna, Dr. Florent-Carre worked as a family medicine residency preceptor in Belle Glade, Florida, before becoming a faculty member.

Health Department Preventive Medicine Residency Program. Dr. Marriott is also a fellow in the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine Health Policy Fellowship for the 2013-14 year.



Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, associate dean of alumni affairs and HPD executive associate dean

for professional affairs, was the recipient of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians' (ACOF) Lifetime Achievement Award during the organization's annual convention held March 13-16 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Anthony Ottaviani, D.O., M.P.H., MACOI, FCCP, clinical professor of internal medicine, regional dean, and director



of medical education at Largo Medical Center, was named president of the American

Osteopathic Foundation (AOF) Board of Directors.



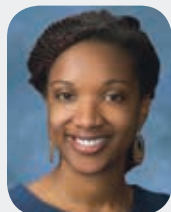
Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., M.Sc., FAF-ACOF dist., FACPP, NSU-

COM dean, was the recipient of the Robert A. Kistner Award during the AACOM Annual Conference. In addition, he was named a Fellow of the American College of Physicians of Philadelphia and was reappointed to a three-year term on the American Osteopathic Association's Consultants on College Accreditation List.



Nicole Cook, Ph.D., M.P.A., assistant professor of public health, was chosen to

represent NSU-COM as one of approximately 300 voting delegates of United States Pharmacopeia (USP), a scientific



Oneka B. Marriott, D.O., M.P.H., assistant professor of pediatrics and public health,

was named assistant director of medical education for the NSU-COM/Palm Beach County

High-Profile Presence at AACOM Conference

During the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Annual Conference, held April 2-5 in Washington, D.C., a number of NSU-COM faculty and staff members and students provided lectures, made poster presentations, won awards, and served as AACOM council chairs.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**“Curriculum Mapping—Operationalizing the Core Competencies”
and “Candidate Interview Experience Using Simulation”**

Marti Echols, Ph.D., M.Ed.

**“Innovations in Faculty Development: Interprofessional Merging
of Education and Medicine (A Model Program Developed by the
Colleges of Education and Osteopathic Medicine)”**

Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., RD

**“Video Reviews of Clinical Encounters: Can Authentic Feedback
Improve Third-Year Student Physicians’ Interpersonal Skills?”**

Heather McCarthy, D.O.

Janet Roseman, Ph.D., R-DMT

**“Implementation of an Online Faculty Development Program on
Interprofessional Education, Practice, and Research”**
Stacey Pinnock, M.S.W., and Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., RD

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

“Admissions—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”

Jacqueline Thomas, D.O.

David L. Thomas, M.D., J.D., Ed.D.

**“Evaluating the Impact of an Educational Presentation About
Osteopathic Medicine on the Knowledge and Attitudes of Future
Health Care Professionals Toward Osteopathic Physicians”**

OMS-III Carisa Champion-Lippmann

OMS-III Elyse Julian

OMS-IV Jessica Wilbur Peterson

Janet Hamstra, Ed.D., M.S.

**“Impact of Interprofessional Health Fairs on Students’
Willingness to Work Together on Interprofessional
Projects: Implication for Future Practice”**

OMS-III Carisa Champion-Lippmann

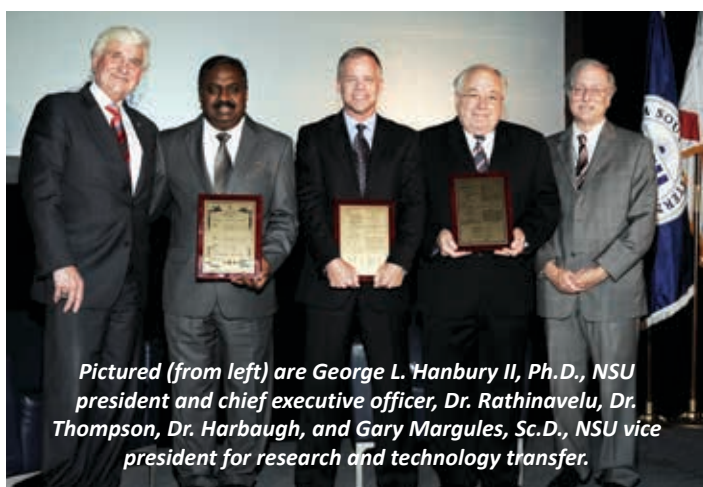
OMS-IV Eric Chung

Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., RD



Researchers Receive Patents...Give Kids a Smile Day...Glass Ceiling Award

Three NSU Researchers Receive Patents



Pictured (from left) are George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and chief executive officer, Dr. Rathinavelu, Dr. Thompson, Dr. Harbaugh, and Gary Margules, Sc.D., NSU vice president for research and technology transfer.

Three NSU professors from three different colleges recently secured patents for their innovations. **Appu Rathinavelu, Ph.D.**, associate dean for institutional planning and development at the College of Pharmacy and executive director of NSU's Rumbaugh-Goodwin Institute for Cancer Research, received a Japanese patent for developing a novel cancer treatment. The small organic molecule called JFD that he and his team discovered is anti-angiogenic, meaning it starves tumors and other cancer cells by preventing blood flow that supplies the tumors with oxygen and nutrients that would otherwise help them to grow and survive.

Jeffrey Thompson, Ph.D., professor of prosthodontics and director of the Biosciences Research Center in the College of Dental Medicine, secured a U.S. patent for developing a surface modification technology to promote chemical bonding between high-performance ceramic materials like alumina and zirconia and biological materials, such as tooth structures, and synthetic materials, such as dentures and crowns.

Joseph Harbaugh, LL.M., professor of law and dean emeritus at the Shepard Broad Law Center, received a U.S. patent for developing a computer-based system called AAMPLE®—the Alternative Admissions Model Program in Legal Education. The program reviews students' outcomes in a small number of classes to predict their likelihood of excelling in law school and passing the state bar exam. This differs from the widespread practice of heavily weighing students' LSAT scores and GPAs to determine admission to law school.

Audiology Students Help Children Hear for the First Time

Doctor of Audiology students from the **College of Health Care Sciences' Department of Audiology** partnered with Phonak to donate hearing aids and other supplies valued at more than \$50,000 to Los Pipitos—a Nicaraguan nonprofit facility for 21 children with disabilities.

As part of NSU's Hearing Aids for Nicaraguan Students service program, six audiology students and a faculty adviser traveled to the Central American country to provide audiograms and other necessary tests and fit the children for their new hearing aids. They also conducted information sessions on how to use and care for the devices for the children and their families.

One child spoke for the first time after receiving his hearing aids. He had previously only mouthed words without making a sound.



Doctor of Audiology students Melissa Cordova and Lola Zaka testing 10-year-old Jorge Mercado's hearing prior to programming his hearing aids.

NSU Executive Vice President Receives Glass Ceiling Award

Jacqueline A. Travisano, M.B.A., CPA, NSU's executive vice president and chief operating officer, has been named a 2014 recipient of the Glass Ceiling Award presented by the Florida Diversity Council.

Travisano is one of 13 women who were recognized during the Fourth Annual Florida Women's Conference held at NSU's main campus on March 7. The National Diversity Council seeks to recognize and honor women who not only achieved personal success but have made it possible for others to more easily follow in their footsteps.

Recipients of the Glass Ceiling Award were honored for meeting cer-

NSU OVERVIEW



tain criteria, including, but not limited to: demonstrated leadership excellence; maintained a steady increase in responsibility throughout their career; established a record of accomplishments in areas of expertise; provided a positive influence in the workplace; and demonstrated integrity and high ethical standards.

NSU College of Dental Medicine Celebrates Gives Kids A Smile Day

Approximately 325 children were given a reason to smile thanks to volunteer NSU dental students and faculty members.

Nearly 300 volunteers from the [College of Dental Medicine](#) provided limited pro bono dental services valued at more than \$100,000 to South Florida children ages 2 to 18 on March 8 as part of Give Kids a Smile Day.

In addition, the more than 1,000 attendees, including the children and their family members, enjoyed a fun carnival atmosphere with Miami Dolphins' player Marcus Thigpen and cheerleaders, face painters, a clown, magicians, music, and Timmy the Tooth.

(Pictured below is Miami Dolphins' player Marcus Thigpen signing autographs for children at the College of Dental Medicine's Give Kids a Smile Day.)



Tampa Cardiovascular Sonography Program Receives National Accreditation



The [College of Health Care Sciences' Cardiovascular Sonography Program](#) received national accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs upon the recommendation of the Joint Review Committee on Education in Cardiovascular Technology. The new accreditation is effective from March 21, 2014, through March 31, 2019.

NSU's Bachelor of Science in Cardiovascular Sonography degree program is designed to prepare students for entry-level positions in the field of cardiovascular sonography. Students take a series of on-line courses at the undergraduate level accompanied by on-campus lectures integrated with ultrasound labs to prepare them for a clinical externship during their second year.

Graduates of the NSU Tampa Cardiovascular Sonography Program are eligible to apply for both the adult echocardiography and the noninvasive vascular technology professional registry exams offered by the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) and/or the corresponding credentials offered by Cardiovascular Credentialing International.



By Scott Colton, B.A., APR, COM/HPD
Director of Medical Communications
and Public Relations

*Dr. Wallace during
a guided tour of the
Mekong River in
Cambodia and Laos.*

D.O. OF DISTINCTION: Dr. Elaine Wallace Savors Life on Her Terms

People watching—the act of observing individuals and their interactions—is a pastime most of us indulge in from time to time when we’re in a public venue.

The appeal of this activity is universal because human beings are a fascinatingly complex and diverse species that exhibits both curious and compelling behaviors. Consequently, while there are over seven billion people inhabiting this planet we call Earth, it can be said with the utmost certainty that each person comprising this massive population is inherently unique despite certain shared characteristics.

How else can you explain the rise to greatness of some individuals who come from incredibly humble backgrounds, while others who seem to have every advantage and opportunity to succeed stumble and fail?

In the case of Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., who serves as the college’s executive associate dean, her

humble beginnings served as a catalyst to fashion a life that has been replete with spiritual enrichment, professional achievement, and bountiful fulfillment.

Humble Start Leads to Lifelong Quest

A hunger to learn and a passion to heal are not attributes most children possess, but then Dr. Wallace has always been anything but ordinary. As a child growing up in Bloomfield, New Jersey, Dr. Wallace was keenly influenced by her parents, who exhibited a strong work ethic and inner drive to provide a happy, balanced life for Dr. Wallace and her younger brother.

“My parents were very modest-means people,” she explained. “My father was born in Louisiana and spent the majority of his life in Mississippi in a house that had a dirt floor and no running water, so as soon as he was able to leave home, he joined the military and traveled the world



Envisioning a bright future.....Adorable in a dress.....With her high school prom date.....Enthusiastic research assistant

to have a better life. My mother, who is one of nine children, was also from a very poor family.”

Despite the lack of financial resources, “I had a really good life,” Dr. Wallace stated. “I was extremely active in school and played on a number of sports teams. In fact, I would say the two things that were most influential in relation to who I became as a person were being in the Girl Scouts and being a goalie in field hockey on my junior and senior high school teams, and later on the state of New Jersey’s team. Being in the Girl Scouts was very important because it shaped values such as philanthropy, honesty, kindness, and community service, while being a goalie shaped the fact that you’re the last person there—and it’s your responsibility to get the job done.”

Because she came from a working-class background where putting food on the table trumped pursuing higher education, no one in her family ever had the opportunity to earn a college degree. In fact, many of her aunts and uncles never had the chance to finish high school. “My father’s siblings were almost all in the military, and my mother’s family all worked blue-collar jobs,” said Dr. Wallace, who would make augmenting her education a lifelong pursuit. “They had a sense of what hard work really meant.”

Early Medical Mindset

Although no one in her family had any vocational experience in the health care field, Dr. Wallace announced to

her parents at a very early age that becoming a physician was her career goal. “When I was six, I decided I wanted to become a doctor, but I have no idea why,” she said. “I think it was because I hated getting shots from my pediatrician. I figured out at an early age that if I was a doctor, I wouldn’t have to take the shots anymore.”

With her medical mindset firmly in place, Dr. Wallace looked forward to the day when she would leave home and embark on the college phase of her educational journey. When it came time to select an undergraduate university, her mother offered up two choices—live at home and go to college in New Jersey or attend the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) in Oxford.

“I was a little bit of a wild child in

high school, so Ole Miss was the only place my mother would let me attend out of state because my grandparents lived in Mississippi,” she admitted.

“My mother thought it would be a safe place for me to be, but I soon discovered that the University of Mississippi was, and still is, one of the top-three party schools in the United States. It was a party every day.”

Having lived in New Jersey from birth, where a more progressive attitude prevailed on most social issues, becoming a student at the University of Mississippi in the early 1970s provided Dr. Wallace with a dissimilar dose of reality. “It was a very interesting time and place to be in Mississippi,” explained Dr. Wallace, who is board certified in family medi-



Performing OMM on a patient during an international medical outreach trip.



flag. We also had strict curfews, and the 100 or so African American students all ate in a segregated area and were not allowed to play on any of the university's sports teams."

In addition to pursuing her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at Ole Miss, Dr. Wallace maintained her athletic interests by lettering in basketball, softball, and volleyball. As for her



medical school ambitions, Dr. Wallace had every intention of matriculating at the University of Mississippi's School of Medicine until she discovered she had to be a Mississippi resident to earn admission. To make it happen, Dr. Wallace completed the majority of her undergraduate coursework in three years and spent her fourth year working in one of the university's research labs, which allowed her to establish her Mississippi residency.

Unlike most bench research, which is of little interest to those working



cine, medical acupuncture, sports medicine, and neuromusculoskeletal medicine. "When I got there, the Dixie flag was flying above the American

medical school ambitions, Dr. Wallace had every intention of matriculating at the University of Mississippi's School of Medicine until she discovered she had to be

a Mississippi resident to earn admission. To make it happen, Dr. Wallace completed the majority of her undergraduate coursework in three years and spent her fourth year working in one of the university's research labs, which allowed her to establish her Mississippi residency. Unlike most bench research, which is of little interest to those working outside the medical realm, Dr. Wallace's college research fascinates because it involved working with marijuana. "The University of Mississippi

was the only place in the United States at the time that was allowed to legally grow marijuana," she said. "In fact, the university's marijuana fields were protected by the U.S. Army. My lab was filled with marijuana, and it was my job to extract the THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), feed it to bacterial cultures, and conduct gas chromatography on the genetics of the subsequent generations to see whether it affected the bacteria's genetic makeup. Our studies showed it did not."

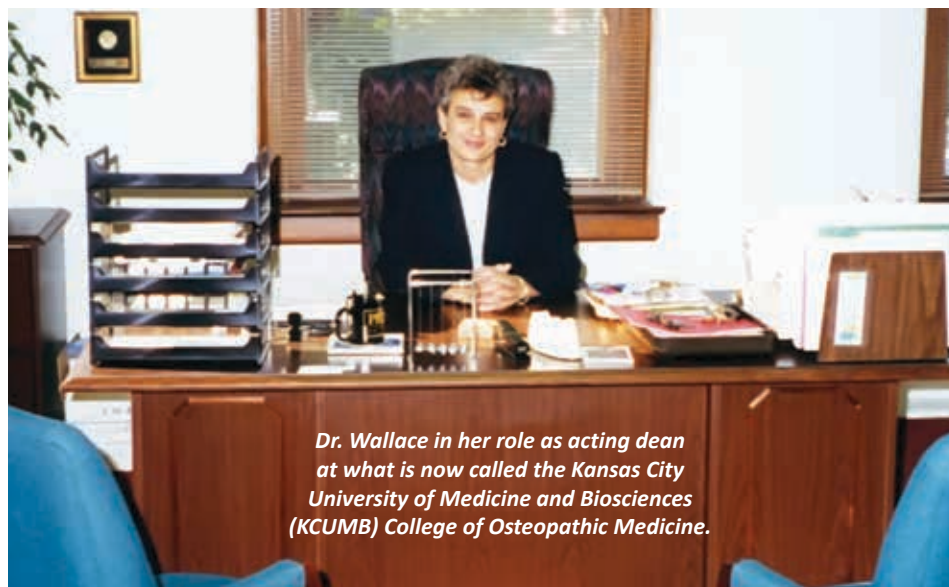
It would prove to be an interesting experience for a number of reasons, including one that was both amusing and abhorrent at the same time. "In Mississippi the cockroaches are large, and here I was working with bacterial medium that was primed with nutrients," she explained of the unwelcome intruders. "Each night, I would turn on the ultraviolet lights to make sure I killed any other bacteria. And each morning when I returned, I would turn on the office lights and watch these nutrient-enhanced, ultraviolet-irradiated cockroaches fall off the counter and stagger around on the floor because they were stoned from eating little bits of marijuana. They loved my lab."

A Career in Kansas City Beckons

Thanks to a chance meeting that occurred while she was conducting

her research, Dr. Wallace's professional trajectory suddenly shifted from Mississippi to the Midwest. "I met Dr. Henry Pace, a pharmacology professor at the University of Mississippi who had made a connection with the University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kansas City, which is now called the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences (KCUMB) College of Osteopathic Medicine," she stated. "And his intention was to take some prospective medical students from Ole Miss to interview in Kansas City. That was the first time I ever heard about osteopathic medicine. I always planned to go into allopathic medicine, but when I heard about osteopathic medicine, I was hooked. Because I had been an athlete my whole life, the fact that osteopathic medicine involved biomechanics spoke to who I was as a person."

For years, Dr. Wallace had anticipated the day when she would attend medical school and begin working toward her goal of becoming a pediatrician. But after being accepted into the Kansas City school and doing her initial pediatrics rotation, her interest immediately dimmed. "I realized I didn't want to be a pediatrician when I did my first pediatrics rotation because I liked children, and it bothered me to see them that sick," said Dr. Wallace,



Dr. Wallace in her role as acting dean at what is now called the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences (KCUMB) College of Osteopathic Medicine.

who was 1 of 10 women comprising her class of 165 students.

Because the medical school had an affiliated hospital located across the street, Dr. Wallace was able to immerse herself in a field of interest related to pediatrics. “We had to deliver three babies in our second year, and I loved it,” she revealed. “In fact, it is the number one thing I have loved most in my career, and it is the only activity I miss from my practice days. I ended up delivering a significant number of babies before I graduated, so I thought I might become an OB/GYN.”

Once she earned her D.O. degree, Dr. Wallace completed a rotating internship at Lakeside Hospital in Kansas City—an experience that allowed her to deliver many more babies. As she delved deeper into the OB/GYN specialty, however, she realized it wasn’t a lifestyle choice she embraced. “I wanted to have my own kids, so I decided I didn’t want to be on call at 3:00 a.m. It wasn’t until almost the last month of my internship that I decided family medicine was what I really wanted to do because I got to see sick—but not gravely ill—kids. Plus, I would be able to deliver babies and do manipulation, which is an immediate gratification discipline in medicine.”

After working in a private family medicine practice with a husband-and-wife team for about two years, Dr. Wallace ventured out on her own, opening a solo practice that brought her great fulfillment. “I delivered two or three babies every week, did office surgery, and practiced OMM,” she explained. “At that time a family practitioner did a fuller scope of practice, and since Kansas City was semi-rural where I was located, I did my own tonsillectomies, dilation and curettages, and numerous other procedures.”

Grappling with HIV/AIDS and Rape

As the early 1980s progressed, a new and catastrophic scourge was terrifying the global landscape and



Dr. Wallace performing holistic healing during a medical outreach trip.

baffling the world’s greatest scientific minds. What would come to be known as HIV/AIDS was ravaging its victims, which seemed to include a disproportionately large percentage of gay men. Experienced physicians who had dealt with everything from polio to cancer were at a loss to explain the unknown epidemic that was claiming thousands of lives. So imagine how it felt to Dr. Wallace, a compassionate physician who had only completed her internship training several years earlier.

“During that time, a quarter of my practice consisted of gay men even though I wasn’t doing any special recruiting for that population,” said Dr. Wallace of that devastating stretch of time. “In 1983-84, my patients began to get very sick, but I had no idea what was going on. Being a new physician, I really questioned whether it was me who was killing them. But then I read an article in the science fiction journal *Omni* about this mysterious disease that had been identified in the gay bars and baths in San Francisco. That was the first time I was informed of the potential of HIV and AIDS, so I quickly came to recognize it as the

virus that was killing my patients. As a result, I became the de facto expert in Kansas City on HIV because there was a big gay male population—and I had the most hands-on experience.”

In addition to working with HIV/AIDS patients, Dr. Wallace had developed a reputation as a rape care specialist due to her successful establishment of a rape crisis center while doing her internship training at Lakeside Hospital. “During my internship, I worked with one of the hospital’s nurses to establish a rape crisis center at the hospital, which became one of two rape crisis centers in Kansas City.

“Between the HIV and rape patients, a large portion of my practice involved extremely traumatic cases,” added Dr. Wallace, who served as the center’s director. “Early on, my gay male patients died, with about a third of them committing suicide, while the other two thirds often died of anemia—not HIV. At that time, physicians did not want to touch the patients because they didn’t know if it was contagious or how it was transmitted. We had to gown and glove, give the patients plastic utensils, and treat them

In 2013, Dr. Wallace received the inaugural NSU President's Excellence in Community Service Award (faculty category).



Dr. Wallace with Jacqueline A. Travisano, M.B.A., CPA, NSU executive vice president and chief operating officer, and George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and chief executive officer.

like pariahs. Looking back, it seemed like a draconian thing, but it was borne out of fear and the unknown.”

Dealing with a seemingly unending barrage of human misery never seemed to shake Dr. Wallace, who relies on her deep-rooted spirituality to contend with life’s thorniest issues. “My philosophy about being an osteopathic physician is that you help people live...you help people die...and you help them in between,” she explained. “I’m a very spiritual person, so death doesn’t bother me.

“I think the gifts I possessed were the ability to understand, connect with people, and move them to another place, be it the afterlife or healing from rape,” she added. “Most people are born and die between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning, so often there were deaths or rape victims I had to deal with at that time of night. I’d come home from a troubling incident like that and wouldn’t sleep, but then I’d get up, go to work, visit a baby I had delivered, and feel renewed by the cycle of life. I’ve always kept the perspective that God put me here to do something.”

An Administrator Is Born...Reluctantly

Happy both personally and professionally, Dr. Wallace wasn’t looking to make any major life transitions; however, the winds of change were in the air. Because she had become locally renowned as a skilled practitioner of manipulative medicine, her osteopathic alma mater began making impassioned pleas for her to become chair of its Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice after the existing chair passed away.

With a thriving and fulfilling family practice taking up most of her time, Dr. Wallace had no desire to take on a full-time faculty position at the Kansas City school, but she did agree to teach in the OMM lab a few hours each week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Around the same time, medical malpractice premiums began skyrocketing due to changes in the health care system, with specialties such as obstetrics no longer being performed by general practitioners under the same malpractice guidelines. As a solo practitioner, Dr. Wallace knew it was time to make some difficult

decisions. “My malpractice premiums began to rise to a level that made it almost prohibitive for me to continue to do obstetrics,” she explained. “With obstetrics fading from my practice, the HIV and rape-crisis patients predominated because I was no longer delivering babies. As a result, the flavor of my practice changed from the cycle of life to an overwhelming tone of trauma.”

After months of deliberation, and with continued overtures from her alma mater echoing in her ears, Dr. Wallace finally agreed to become chair of the OPP department—if the college accepted her stipulations. “I finally acquiesced and said, ‘Okay, I will leave my practice under two conditions. Number one, you will allow me to bring my practice to the school, and number two, you will allow me to continue delivering babies.’”

Wisely, the college accepted her terms. But after serving as OPP chair for only six scant months, a sizable scandal rocked the college to its core—and transformed Dr. Wallace from faculty member to top administrator almost overnight. “At that time I knew nothing about structured academics, and I still had my private practice,” Dr. Wallace recalled. “Then we found out the president of the college had bankrupted the medical school, which resulted in all the clinicians being let go with the exception of the dean and me, because you need to have an academic dean and you need to have a chair of the manipulation department.

“I arrived at a school that had a robust osteopathic faculty and soon became one of just two D.O.s left,” she added. “And since I was the only other D.O. on staff, I was named dean of clinical education even though I had no specific experience. It certainly was not in any way what I thought I would be doing with my life.”

Blessed with a gift to adapt swiftly to change, Dr. Wallace flourished as a high-level administrator at the Kansas City school and began making an in-

novative mark both in the college and throughout the osteopathic profession. In the neuromusculoskeletal medicine realm, Dr. Wallace originated a method of osteopathic diagnosis and treatment called Torque Unwinding—a diagnostic modality that uses physics to calculate the location of somatic dysfunctions in the body and to calculate the influence of strain patterns in the soma.

During her lengthy career at Kansas City College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Wallace served in numerous leadership capacities, earned an impressive nine Professor of the Year awards from the first- and second-year classes, and received the Missouri Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. In the early 1990s, however, a momentous event occurred when she chaired the committee charged with hiring a new academic dean. The eventual selectee—a charismatic character named Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni—would eventually set in motion a chain of events that profoundly altered Dr. Wallace's life, both personally and professionally.

Reunited...and it Feels so Good

Drs. Silvagni and Wallace worked side by side for eight years, developing a strong and effective partnership. During the late 1990s, however, philosophical changes at the Kansas City school convinced both Drs. Silvagni and Wallace the time had come to pursue new professional vistas. Dr. Silvagni masterminded his exit first, becoming dean of NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine in July 1998—leaving Dr. Wallace as acting dean of KCUMB. In the ensuing year, Dr. Wallace followed suit, relocating to Maryland with the objective of creating an innovative niche medical business.

"I had been working on establishing a company in Maryland that would do house calls in hotels," said Dr. Wallace, who had purchased a 10-acre farm in the area. At the same time, however, a colleague from her not-too-distant past

was using his considerable persuasion skills to convince Dr. Wallace to join him in sunny South Florida.

"A year earlier, when Dr. Silvagni left Kansas City to work at NSU, he began to harass me on a regular basis about coming down to Florida, just as I had been harassed on a regular basis to work at the osteopathic medical school in Kansas City," she explained. "I told him, 'Tony, I hate Florida, so I'm not coming.' But he would continue to call. As you know, Dr. Silvagni can be quite persistent, and eventually he wore me down."

Although Dr. Wallace was willing to come to South Florida to work at NSU-COM and become chair of its Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, she was not about to totally forego her bucolic existence in Maryland. "I said, 'Listen, I have two requirements. I'll come to Florida if I can work four days a week and can fly back and forth to Maryland each week because I'm not moving to Florida.' And for the first seven years I worked here, that's exactly what I did. I flew in every Monday morning and flew out every Thursday night to go home to my farm and six dogs and horses."

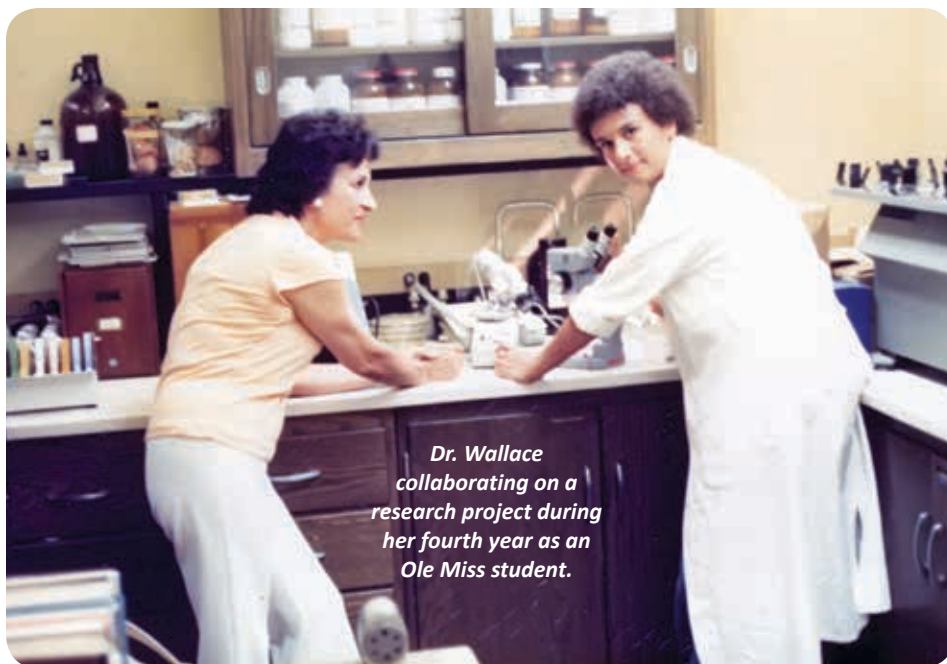
Throughout her 14-year NSU-COM career, Dr. Wallace has used her forward-thinking philosophy and impressive work ethic to mastermind a number of unique administrative and programmatic additions and enhancements working in tandem with Dr. Silvagni. So what makes their 23-year partnership so alchemically successful?

"We work extraordinarily well together because he is excellent at external politics and I'm the internal worker," she said. "The thing that impresses me most about working with Dr. Silvagni is that I believe in the kindness of his heart. We have a collegial relationship that allows us to trust one another, which has really been empowering. The things I've been able to achieve at NSU have occurred because Dr. Silvagni had the vision and trust to say to me, 'Go ahead and do them.'"

In an NSU-COM career overflowing with achievement, Dr. Wallace takes specific pride in one significant enhancement. "Of the things I've accomplished here, from starting our Sports Medicine Fellowship, to promoting the student requirement for community service and medical Spanish, to international medical outreach programs,



FAMILY PORTRAIT: Pictured (clockwise from left) are daughter Raven, Dr. Wallace, Dr. Jill Wallace-Ross, and twin sons Hawk and Jagger at the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Convention NSU-COM alumni reception in February 2014.



Dr. Wallace collaborating on a research project during her fourth year as an Ole Miss student.

to faculty educational programs, to being the first recipient of the NSU President's Excellence in Community Service Award in the faculty category, I think the thing that touches me most is our Chairs Didactic Program," she stated. "One of the things about being a physician in academics is that no one trains you to be an academician. Who teaches the doctors how to be educators, department chairs, and administrators? When I came here, there were a lot of new department chairs, so I created the Chairs Didactic Program, where the department chairs are required to attend a training program twice a month.

"Initially, it was not a warmly embraced program because we were mandating that the chairs attend training from 8:00-9:30 two Thursday mornings a month. But what has happened with the program has been one of the most rewarding in my career, specifically because this nidus of individuals has been together for four years. We've dealt with areas such as what it takes to deal with HR and legal issues, to become good administrators, to deal with difficult faculty members, and to be encouraging to other faculty members. More importantly, we've become a very tightknit group of colleagues and friends. It is the

most rewarding group of colleagues I have ever been involved with."

Along with attaining professional happiness at NSU-COM, Dr. Wallace found personal fulfillment as well when she met her partner, Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., who serves as assistant professor of family medicine. Their union has produced three wonderful children—six-year-old Raven and three-year-old twins Hawk and Jagger, who bring much joy to her life. "I always wanted to have children, so I'm truly grateful to be a parent now at this stage of my life," said Dr. Wallace of her three precocious offspring. They remind me every day what life is truly all about."

Living for Today...Planning for Tomorrow

One trait that makes Dr. Wallace so intrinsically interesting is her commitment to setting both short- and long-term goals, which is a practice she has maintained religiously throughout her adult life. "Early on, I decided I wanted to continually reflect on my life," she explained. "Once a year, I would go someplace and compose my plan for the next year. And then once every 5 to 10 years, I would go somewhere and write up my long-term goals. The first place I chose to go for my long-

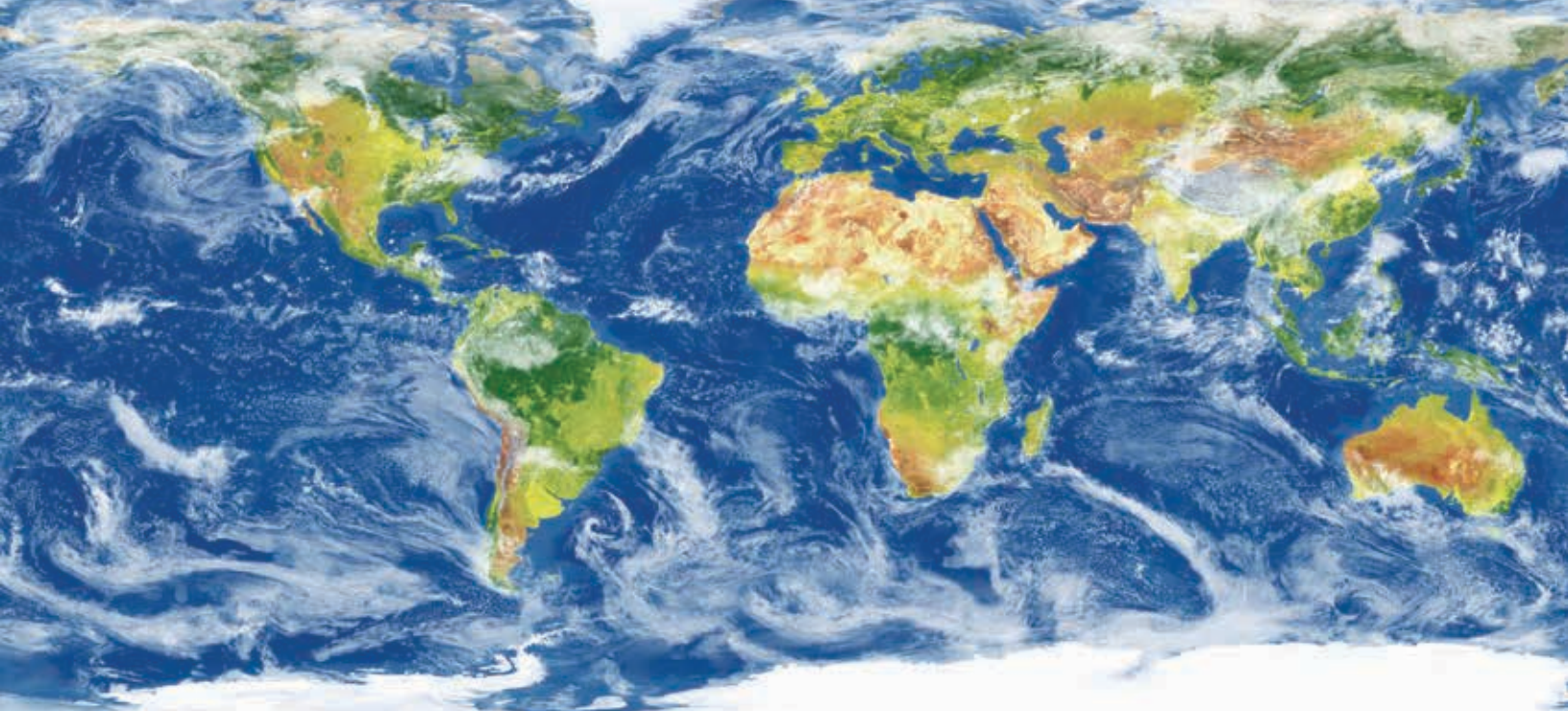
term plan was Chichen Itza in Mexico because of all the pyramids I've been to around the world, Chichen Itza is my favorite. So every 5 or 10 years I return to Chichen Itza, sit down with my journal, and think about what I want to accomplish over the next decade."

In terms of her annual contemplation site, Dr. Wallace selected Amsterdam, which she has visited over 20 times. "I'm sure I've spent many a lifetime in Amsterdam because there's something about the way the light bounces off the water in the canals that does something to my brain," she revealed. "It really attracts me."

Interestingly, the last time she visited Amsterdam at the end of 2012, Dr. Wallace experienced a powerful epiphany that brought her to a place all enlightened human beings hope to reach. "The last time I visited Amsterdam, I flew over by myself with my journal and enough money in my pocket to deal with my living expenses for a week," she explained. "But as I sat on the bench I usually sit on and prepared to write, I thought to myself, 'What do I want to do with my life in the next year?' It only took me one paragraph to realize I had gotten to the point where I had achieved everything I wanted in life—a great job, a wonderful partnership, and three beautiful children. So I took the money I had in my pocket, bought a return ticket, and returned home the next day without even staying in Amsterdam 24 hours. I have not been back since.

"I've hit a place in my life where I'm really happy," she concluded. "I am, however, planning my next decade. And I think the thing on the top of my list is to write a book because I feel I have some unique and esoteric experiences to share because I've lived a life that is really four or five lives rolled into one."

When Dr. Wallace publishes her collection of life experiences, there's no doubt it will be a must-read for all who know her—as well as the world beyond.



Global Travels, Lifelong Learning Broaden Dr. Wallace's Worldview

For a person as accomplished as Dr. Wallace, she continues to possess an innate hunger to learn more about life and human behavior, which is evidenced by her expansive—and growing—list of academic degrees, which includes master's in higher education teaching and leadership, criminal justice, and brain research. “One of the great benefits we get from working at NSU is the ability to receive additional education for free or for a nominal amount of money,” said Dr. Wallace, who is currently pursuing a fifth academic degree—an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership. “I like education because I’m very diverse in my interests.”

Dr. Wallace is equally as passionate when it comes to learning more about the world, which is epitomized by her having visited 75 countries on all 7 continents. “Not only do I feel like I’m a child of God; I feel like I’m a child of the world,” she explained.

“When I moved out on my own, I made a vow that I was going to take one vacation a year,” she added. “I

began by going to all the ancient pyramid areas to learn more about ancient cultures such as the Incas, Mayans, and Aztecs. Then I went through the religions of the world and visited those areas.”

According to Dr. Wallace, who made it a goal to be in Russia the day it became a democracy and visited China the first year it was open to Westerners, her diverse travels spurred in her an interest in learning more about shamanism—the ancient traditions of medicine men. “One of my hobbies is studying ancient medicine and its traditions, so I’ve studied in places such as Thailand, China, Mexico, the American Southwest, Peru, and other places in South America to work with medicine men,” she revealed. “I even lived in Peru for two months and spent a month of that time living in a tree with a shaman who lived deep in the jungle and was keeping HIV patients alive a year longer than we were in the United States by using poultices and herbs he grew in his garden.

“One of the other fascinating things I discovered was that every shaman

I worked with did manipulation,” she said. “I believe there’s a kind of worldwide knowledge, a collective unconsciousness of healing that certain people know about. Of all the teachers I’ve had in my life, the two greatest have been travel and books. I’ve learned more about people and life and possibilities from travel and books than I ever learned in medical school, my undergraduate studies, or in earning three master’s degrees. Honestly though, I may soon add a third—my children. They are teaching me things I didn’t even know I didn’t know.”





During the week of March 22-29, a group of 12 first-year students participated in the inaugural NSU-COM Medical Outreach Trip to Brazil. While this was our first medical outreach trip, some of us were world travelers, while others had only been out of the country a few times. Despite these differences, the destination of our medical outreach to Niteroi/Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was unlike any foreign place most of us have traveled to before.

GLOBAL OUTREACH

NSU-COM Coordinates Inaugural Medical Outreach Trip to Brazil

By OMS-I Courtney O'Brien and OMS-I Karen Muschler



Rightfully so, Brazil is a country that is very proud of its history and distinct Latin flare, which sets it apart from the rest of South America. Part of Brazil's uniqueness lies in the fact that it is the only country in South America that speaks Portuguese. Regardless of the number of stamps we each had on our passports, we shared one common pitfall—none of us could speak the language. Fortunately, our preceptor Rogerio Faillace, M.D., grew up in Niteroi and received his medical education at the local university. Our other preceptors included Almos Trif, Ph.D., who has served on previous medical outreach trips, and Daniel Murchison, D.O., a 2013 NSU-COM graduate.

Following a long red-eye flight, the first day of the trip began with an early Saturday morning arrival into Rio de Janeiro. The desire to nap—a well-known habit of medical students—soon dissipated as our bus drove over the bridge to Niteroi, where we would be staying and working at the clinic. Niteroi is Rio's sister city across the bay that is known for having the most breathtaking views of Rio de Janeiro. With our faces pressed against the window, we were mesmerized by the beauty of this ethereal city.

Rio was a perfect juxtaposition between a big metropolitan city and a tropical paradise, nestled among jungle-inhabited mountains that jutted out of the Atlantic sea and stretches of sandy white beaches. The Christ the Redeemer statue stood pristinely on a high mountaintop in the background of the Tijuca rainforest, overlooking the entire city and serving as a protector of its people. Although slightly drained from traveling and our Friday microbiology exam, we looked forward to discovering the hidden gems of this city the moment we arrived.

The first two days of our trip included a tour around Rio's many recognized sites, including the Rio de Janeiro Cathedral, the Municipal Theater, the market of Ipanema,

and the Christ the Redeemer statue. We strolled along the infamous black-and-white mosaic streets of Rio, absorbing the bustle of the city, taking pictures, and interacting with the locals. After a full day of walking, we sipped from fresh coconuts on the beach and drank in the serenity as the waves collapsed onto the shore. We had worked up quite the appetite and concluded the weekend with a group dinner at a traditional Brazilian churrasco steakhouse that served us enough delicious meat to last the entire week.

During the dinner, Dr. Faillace, an NSU-COM pediatrician, prepared us for the following morning at the clinic and shared with us the story of his medical education in Brazil. It was an eventful and pleasant weekend of tourism, but we were ready to finally work in the clinic we had heard so much about. When we returned to the hotel, we ended the night by relaxing on the rooftop, where we soaked in the panoramic view of the lit-up city and mentally prepared for the week ahead.

The first day of clinic work consisted of introductions to the staff, the translators, and several medical students from Niteroi's medical university. Two Brazilian medical students helped us with translation through-

“To no surprise, one of the favorite specialties we shadowed was physical therapy because we were able to help patients using our beloved osteopathic techniques.”

out the week and taught us a great deal of clinical knowledge we had not yet encountered. In the clinic, we had our choice to shadow and participate in several specialties, including nutrition, internal medicine, physical therapy, neurology, dermatology, cardiology, and endocrinology. Our group also attended several lectures on important topics impacting Brazil's health care, specifically on Dengue fever, tuberculosis vaccination, tobacco cessation, and stress management. As we learned, the Brazilian public health care system manages its minimal funds by advocating for preventive health—a subject well familiar to us D.O. student physicians. It was interesting to see the similarities between our health care systems and also to appreciate the differences.

Throughout the week, the preceptors were always by our side to serve as educators and teach us the skills we had not yet learned. Dr. Trif, a pathology professor in the NSU College of Medical Sciences, joined the students in the patient rooms and was able to elaborate on a number of infectious diseases. In dermatology, several students had the opportunity to observe conditions not commonly seen in the U.S. hospitals, which included patients with leprosy and tropical fungal diseases. Dr. Murchison, a first-year ER resident in West Virginia, assisted students in wound care with the patients' dressings, willingly answered students' questions, and elaborated on the conditions we encountered in the clinic. In pediatrics, Dr. Faillace was able to use his expertise to demonstrate the steps involved in doing physical exams on children—something most of us had only recently encountered in class. While doing a children's eye screening, several students proclaimed, “I finally saw the red reflex!”

To no surprise, one of the favorite specialties we shadowed was physical therapy because we were able to help patients using our beloved osteopathic techniques. In addition, we were fortunate to observe new techniques performed by the Brazilian physical therapist that could be incorporated into our knowledge base of manipulative medicine. Each of us was enthusiastic to lend a hand and yearned to gain exposure to a different type of health care management so we could return to the United States as more-holistic student physicians.

At the end of the week, Dr. Faillace surprised us with a visit to the children's hospital ward at the large public hospital where the medical students did their rounds. Dressed up in quirky costumes with props and tambourines, we followed Dr. Faillace while he played his guitar through the quiet halls, singing children's songs for all to hear. A parent of one of our students donated small toys to give

to the sick children, and the Brazilian parents were just as pleased as their children when we paraded through the door dressed as animals and clowns. It definitely gave them something to laugh about. The joy on the children's faces was the perfect last souvenir to a memorable week.

We will continue to integrate international medicine into our future careers. As future osteopathic physicians, we are instilled with the duty to give back to the community and to use our skills to help as many people as possible. Many of the students agreed that this trip was an experience to remember because it filled in a piece of the puzzle of our long journey to become physicians. We are fortunate that NSU-COM offers one of the few D.O. programs in the country that coordinates medical outreach trips, allowing students to experience the endless possibilities the profession of medicine and the world hold in store.





Graduation 2014

Senior Week Celebrates Major Milestones

Senior Week provided an abundance of opportunities for the class of 2014 to get reacquainted while participating in a range of fun-filled activities that included a jovial dining experience at Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. in Fort Lauderdale and a festive awards banquet at the Westin Diplomat Resort and Spa in Hollywood.

The week culminated on Sunday, May 18 when 238 D.O., 78 Master of Public Health, 29 Master of Biomedical Informatics and 3 Master of Disaster and Emergency Preparedness degrees were conferred during the NSU Health Professions Division (HPD) Commencement Ceremony at the BB&T Center in Sunrise.

During the ceremony, graduates from the various HPD colleges were acknowledged for their accomplishments in front of an enthusiastic audience filled with family, friends, and faculty members. John H. Armstrong, M.D., FACS, Florida's surgeon general and secretary of health, served as the keynote speaker.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Chancellor's Award (D.O. Program)

Exemplifies the characteristics of a fine osteopathic physician—a combination of scholarship, leadership, integrity, humanity, and loyalty to the profession

Recipient
Parul Cham, D.O.

Presenter
Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.,
Pharm.D., M.Sc.



Dean's Award (D.O. Program)

Presented for academic excellence to the student graduating with the highest scholastic achievement in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Program

Recipient
Cara Swintelski, D.O.

Presenter
Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.,
Pharm.D., M.Sc.

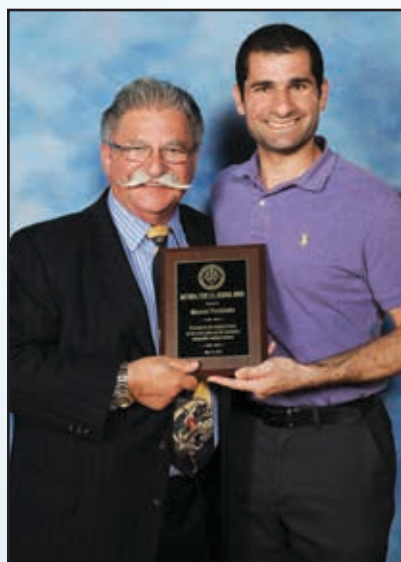


Morton and Geraldine Terry Internal Medicine Award

Presented to the student for the highest achievement in the study of internal medicine, both academic and clinical

Recipient
**Sharien Mahtani
(Amarnani), D.O.**

Presenter
Samuel Snyder, D.O.



Matthew A. Terry, D.O., Memorial Award

Presented to the student chosen by his or her peers as the exemplary osteopathic medical student

Recipient
**Manuel Portalatin,
D.O., M.P.H.**

Presenter
Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.,
Pharm.D., M.Sc.



Dean's Community Award

Awarded to that member of the graduating class who, by personal and professional conduct, and by contributions to the general program of NSU-COM, has been deemed worthy of special recognition

Recipient
Erik Adair, D.O.

Presenter
Debbi Cohn Steinkohl,
M.H.S.A.



Dean's Government and Public Policy Award

Presented to that member of the graduating class who has shown unique interest in developing an understanding of governmental and public health care policies

Recipient
Britani Kessler, D.O.

Presenter
James Howell,
M.D., M.P.H.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Chancellor's Award (M.P.H. Program)

Presented to the student who best exemplifies the characteristics of a fine public health professional—a combination of scholarship, leadership, integrity, humanity, and loyalty to the profession

Recipient
Ludmilla Paul, M.P.H.

Presenter
Cyril Blavo, D.O.,
M.P.H. and T.M.



Dean's Award (M.P.H. Program)

Presented for academic excellence to the student graduating with the highest scholastic achievement in the Master of Public Health Program

Recipient
Shoshana Levy, M.P.H.

Presenter
Cyril Blavo, D.O.,
M.P.H. and T.M.



Chancellor's Award (Biomedical Informatics Program)

Exemplifies the characteristics of a fine biomedical informatics professional—a combination of scholarship, leadership, integrity, humanity, and loyalty to the profession

Recipient
April Green, M.S.B.I.

Presenter
Jennie Q. Lou,
M.D., M.Sc.



Dean's Award (Biomedical Informatics Program)

Presented to the student graduating with the highest scholastic achievement in the Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics Program

Recipient
**Anthony Meglino,
M.S.B.I.**

Presenter
Jennie Q. Lou,
M.D., M.Sc.



Dean's Award (Disaster/Emergency Preparedness)

Presented for academic excellence to the student graduating with the highest scholastic achievement in the Master of Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Program

Recipient
**Christina Ortiz
M.S. DEP**

Presenter
Kelley Davis, Ph.D.



Alumni Association Award

Presented to the student who, by his/her leadership, has done the most to maintain the cohesiveness, unity, and esprit de corps within his/her class for all four years

Recipient
Tara Nowakhtar, D.O.

Presenter
Lynne Cawley, M.Sc.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Morton and Mary Smith Achievement Award

Presented to the student exhibiting the highest quality of service and leadership, combined with scholarship, integrity, and personal worth

Recipient
Katherine Leicht, D.O.

Presenter
Elaine Wallace,
D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S.



Florida Chapter, American Academy of Osteopathy Award in OMM

Presented to the student who, in the opinion of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, has achieved the highest proficiency in osteopathic therapeutics

Recipient
Robert Kawa, D.O.

Presenter
David Boesler, D.O., M.S.



Excellence in Emergency Medicine Award

Presented to the graduate who has demonstrated outstanding proficiency in emergency medicine

Recipient
Burr Fong, D.O.

Presenter
John Pellosie, Jr.,
D.O., M.P.H.



Albert L. Weiner, D.O., Memorial Psychiatry Award

Presented in memory of Dr. Albert Weiner to the student achieving the greatest proficiency in psychiatry

Recipient
Jessica Wilbur, D.O.

Presenter
Raymond Ownby, M.D.,
Ph.D., M.B.A.



Clinical Service Award

Presented to the student judged to be outstanding in clinical service

Recipient
**Jennifer Alexander,
D.O., M.P.H.**

Presenter
Joseph De Gaetano,
D.O., M.S.Ed



Samuel J. Salman, D.O., Award in Family Medicine

Presented by the FSACOPF to the student whose scholarship, patient empathy, dedication, concern, and goals epitomize the osteopathic family physician

Recipient
Kiyomi Goto, D.O.

Presenter
Barbara Arcos, D.O.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence

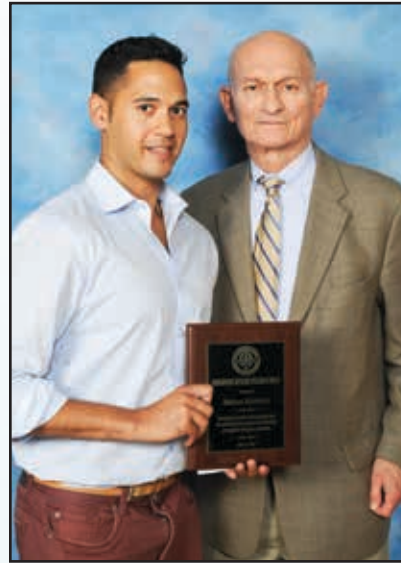


Dean's Organizational Award

Presented to the senior who demonstrated organizational skills and leadership and received recognition from his/her peers during a productive academic career

Recipients
Allison Amore, D.O.
Louis Michaelos, D.O.

Presenter
David Thomas,
M.D., J.D., Ed.D.



Research Award (D.O. Program)

Presented to a member of the graduating class who performed student research at a level worthy of recognition among peers and faculty members

Recipients
Nathan Maltezos, D.O.
Aditya Vora, D.O.

Presenter
Leonard Levy,
D.P.M., M.P.H.



Research Award (M.P.H. Program)

Presented to the student who demonstrated an effort to contribute to new knowledge in public health through research

Recipient
Uwayemwen Aideyan, M.P.H.

Presenter
Rosebud Foster, Ed.D.



Research Award (Biomedical Informatics Program)

Presented to a member of the graduating class who performed student research at a level worthy of recognition among peers and faculty members

Recipient
Clarissa Alexander, M.S.B.I.

Presenter
Jennie Q. Lou,
M.D., M.Sc.



Rose Community Service Award

Presented to the student who demonstrated sincere interest in community service or community projects

Recipient
Jeremiah Robison, D.O.

Presenter
Steven Zucker,
D.M.D., M.Ed.



A. Alvin Greber, D.O., Cardiology Award

Presented to the student demonstrating outstanding aptitude academically with recognized clinical application of knowledge in patients with cardiovascular disease

Recipient
Vianka Perez, D.O.

Presenter
Samuel Snyder, D.O.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Excellence in Geriatrics Award

Presented for aptitude and interest in geriatrics as well as clinical competency and superior performance in the geriatrics rotation

Recipient

**Holly Munson,
D.O., M.P.H.**

Presenter

**Naushira Pandya,
M.D., CMD**



Outstanding Student in the Study of Pediatrics

Presented to an outstanding student who is in the upper quarter of the class in rank and possesses honor grades in pediatric ambulatory and hospital rotations as well as one elective in a pediatric area with an honor grade

Recipient

Scott Terry, D.O.

Presenter

Edward Packer, D.O.



Outstanding Student in Pediatric Service

Awarded to a student in the upper third of class in rank who organized and participated in at least three children's projects and motivated children-related projects at NSU-COM

Recipient

**Brittany Stutzman,
D.O., M.P.H.**

Presenter

Rogério Faillace, M.D.



Endocrine Society Award

Presented to the student who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in the area and/or study of endocrinology

Recipient

Parul Cham, D.O.

Presenter

**Naushira Pandya,
M.D., CMD**



Donna Jones Morisugu Award

Presented to the spouse of a graduating student who best exemplifies the role of a professional's partner in being an individual in his or her own right while being supportive of mate, family, and the osteopathic profession

Recipient

Lance Rogers

Presenter

Marti Echols, Ph.D.



Daniel R. Barkus, D.O., Outstanding Achievement in the Study of OB/GYN

Ranked in the top 25 percent of the class, is pursuing OB/GYN residency training, and has obtained the highest academic grade in the women's health course

Recipient

Allison Amore, D.O.

Presenter

Kenneth Johnson, D.O.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Student Service Award (Biomedical Informatics Program)

Presented to the student who demonstrated sincere interest in community service or community projects

Recipient

Troy Rubizovsky, M.S.B.I.

Presenter

Steve Bronsberg, Ph.D., M.S., M.H.S.A.



Student Service Award (M.P.H. Program)

Presented to the Master of Public Health student who demonstrated commitment to community service

Recipient

Claude Vertus, M.P.H.

Presenter

Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H. and T.M.



ACOG District XII Outstanding Achievement in the Service of OB/GYN

For demonstrated intention of pursuing residency training in OB/GYN and organized/participated in the greatest number of women's health activities

Recipient

Tara Nowakhtar, D.O.

Presenter

Kenneth Johnson, D.O.



Research Fellowship Award

Presented to the members of the graduating class who successfully completed the NSU-COM Predoctoral Research Fellowship

Recipients

Nathan Maltezos, D.O.
Aditya Vora, D.O.

Presenter

Raymond Ownby, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A.



Golden Apple Award (D.O. Program)

Presented by the class of 2014 to a faculty or staff member deemed most outstanding by the graduating class

Recipient

David Boesler, D.O., M.S.

Presenter

Louis Michaelos, D.O.



Golden Apple Award (M.P.H. Program)

Presented by the class of 2014 to the M.P.H. faculty member deemed most outstanding by the graduating class

Recipient

Alina Perez, J.D., M.P.H., LCSW

Presenter

Matthew McDiarmid, M.S. DEP, M.P.H.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Golden Apple Award (Biomedical Informatics Program)

*Presented by the class
of 2014 to the M.S.B.I.
faculty member deemed
most outstanding by the
graduating class.*

Recipient

**David Hays,
D.P.A., M.A.**

Presenter

**Vanessa Hawrylak,
M.S.B.I.**



Golden Apple Award (Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Program)

*Presented by the class
of 2014 to the IDEP
faculty member deemed
most outstanding by the
graduating class*

Recipient

Kelley Davis, Ph.D.

Presenter

**Christina Ortiz,
M.S. DEP**



The **Gold Humanism Honor Society** honors senior medical students, residents, role-model physician teachers, and other exemplars that have demonstrated excellence in clinical care, leadership, compassion, and dedication to service and was organized to elevate the values of humanism and professionalism within the field of medicine and its constituent institutions. Following are the individuals who earned membership in the Gold Humanism Honor Society: Erik Adair, D.O., Allison Amore, D.O., Michael Appelbatt, D.O., Katherine Beditz, D.O., Kacie Bhushan, D.O., M.P.H., Charles Cevallos, D.O., M.P.H., Belinda Collias, D.O., Jacob Flury, D.O., Katie Gesch, D.O., Ashley Guthrie, D.O., Naomasa Hase, D.O., M.P.H., Taylor Hathaway, D.O., Britani Kessler, D.O., Milla Kviatkovsky, D.O., Mark Liwanag, D.O., Tara Nowakhtar, D.O., Eric Pitts, D.O., Manuel Portalatin, D.O., M.P.H., Jeremiah Robison, D.O., Brittany Stutzman, D.O., M.P.H., Jennifer Wellington, D.O., Jessica Wilbur, D.O., and Serena Wong, D.O.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



NSU-COM was proud to host its annual **Promotion Commissioning Ceremony** for graduating seniors who will be entering the U.S. armed services. The event, which was established in 2005 to honor and showcase support for graduates who will be doing medical tours of duty in the armed services, is held annually to facilitate the promotion of these young officers from the rank of second lieutenant (army and air force) or ensign (navy) to the rank of captain (army/air force) or lieutenant (navy). These young men and women have attended NSU-COM via the armed services Health Professions Scholarship Program.

The graduates have committed to serve in the U.S. armed forces for a minimum of eight years as part of their scholarship obligation. Most will be pursuing graduate medical education opportunities within the armed services after leaving NSU-COM. This year's ceremony was presided over by Patricio Bruno, D.O., FAAFP, FHM, who currently holds the rank of lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve. Following are the graduates who were recognized at the ceremony:

United States Army

Carlin Corsino, D.O., Emilio Marzan, D.O., Michael Morrison, D.O., Sandeep Saran, D.O., Pulkit Saxena, D.O., and Nicholas Weiss, D.O.

United States Navy

Tyler House, D.O., and Bradley Yingst, D.O.

United States Air Force

Melissa Chrites, D.O., Mark Hotchkiss, D.O., and Andrew Pan, D.O.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Awards

The Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Awards, which are presented by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, recognize one graduating medical student and one outstanding faculty member judged to be exemplary in their compassion and sensitivity in patient care. These individuals consistently demonstrate compassion and empathy, act as role models for professional behavior, and demonstrate cultural sensitivity in working with people of diverse backgrounds.

Recipients

Jennifer Wellington, D.O. (graduating student) and
Edward Packer, D.O. (faculty member)

Presenter

David Boesler, D.O., M.S.



Osteopathic Principles and Practice Fellowship Certificates

Presented to the students who completed a predoctoral clinical and teaching fellowship in osteopathic principles and practice from July 2009 to May 2012

Recipients

Nicholas Camposeo, D.O.
Randal Davis, D.O.
Robert Kawa, D.O.
Tara Nowakhtar, D.O.
Meighan O'Connor, D.O.
Brandon Parker, D.O.

Presenter

David Boesler, D.O., M.S.



Interprofessional Leadership Award

Presented to the student who represents exceptional leadership and dedication to collaborative learning through research of interprofessional concepts and the practice of team-based care

Recipients

Anna Lowell M.S. DEP, M.P.H.
Matthew McDiarmid M.S. DEP, M.P.H.

Presenter: **Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., RD**



Biomedical Informatics Program Director's Award

Presented to a student who has overcome significant challenges in the pursuit of his/her degree of M.S. in Biomedical Informatics

Recipients

Clarissa Alexander, M.S.B.I.
Stephen Amoah, M.S.B.I.

Presenter

Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc.

Graduation 2014: Awards of Excellence



Sigma Sigma Phi is a national honorary osteopathic service fraternity that was established in 1921 in Kirksville, Missouri, by seven students from the American School of Osteopathic Medicine. The fraternity's main objectives include furthering the science of osteopathic medicine and its standards of practice as well as promoting a higher degree of fellowship among its students. To earn membership consideration, Sigma Sigma Phi members are required to have a minimum grade point average of 80 percent; however, selection is based primarily upon service and leadership in the osteopathic community. Following are the individuals who earned membership in Sigma Sigma Phi: *Sharien Mahtani, D.O., Kacie Bhushan, D.O., M.P.H., Charles Cevallos, D.O., M.P.H., Eric Chung, D.O., M.P.H., Michael Dalla Betta, D.O., Joslyn Gober, D.O., Charee Howard, D.O., John Howard, D.O., Alice Lin, D.O., Eric Pitts, D.O., Jeremiah Robison, D.O., Christiana Roselli, D.O., Kristina Skinner, D.O., Jessica Staller, D.O., Brittany Stutzman, D.O., M.P.H., Erica Turse, D.O., Lena Virasch, D.O., Jennifer Wellington, D.O., and Serena Wong, D.O.*



Membership in the **Theta Chapter of the Psi Sigma Alpha National Osteopathic Scholastic Honor Society** is based on laudable traits such as academic achievement (placing in the top 10 percent of their class), high moral character, and integrity. This year's inductees are *Jacob Flury, D.O., Kiyomi Goto, D.O., Shaakir Hasan, D.O., Jonathan Hussain, D.O., Przemyslaw Iwaniwski, D.O., Milla Kviatkovsky, D.O., Gareth Mcgee, D.O., Louis Michaelos, D.O., Nickolas Poulos, D.O., Dustin Price, D.O., Jetter Robertson, D.O., Aaron Shady, D.O., Brittany Slagle, D.O., Cara Swintelski, D.O., Scott Terry, D.O., Jennifer Wellington, D.O., Kyle White, D.O., Tiffanie Wong, D.O., and E. Quinn Ziatyk, D.O., M.P.H.*

Ronee Aaron, D.O. ('99) recently joined the medical staff at Lourdes/Mercy Medical Associates in Paducah, Kentucky. Dr. Aaron, who previously worked at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital in Ashland, Kentucky, is certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and the Association for Convulsive Therapy.



Theresa Cao, D.O., FAOCD ('05) was appointed clinical assistant professor in the Department of Dermatology and

Cutaneous Surgery/Division of Melanocytic Tumors and Mohs Surgery at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Prior to her affiliation with the University of Miami, Dr. Cao completed a procedural dermatology/Mohs micrographic surgery fellowship through the State University of New York Medical Center in Brooklyn. Dr. Cao, who specializes in Mohs micrographic surgery, is board certified in dermatology and family medicine and is a Fellow of the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology.



Harold L. Dalton, D.O. ('96) was inducted on May 17 as president of the Florida Society of

Interventional Pain Physicians. This is Dr. Dalton's fifth active role with the society, which has included previous stints as a board member, carrier adviser council member, secretary, and president elect. His presidency goals include effecting positive regulatory change and helping to ensure that Florida citizens continue to have greater access to the highest level of quality pain management care.

Michael J. Friedman, D.O. ('94), assistant professor in the Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine Department of Psychiatry and director of consultation and liaison psychiatry services at Kennedy Memorial Hospitals, was named a Top Doc in Psychiatry in *South Jersey Magazine* for 2011, 2012, and 2013.



Tyese Gaines, D.O. ('06) was named assistant medical director of Raritan Bay Medical Center in New Jersey.

Kendra Hall, D.O., M.P.H. ('98), who is board certified in family practice and hospice and palliative care medicine, was named medical director of Good Shepherd Hospice and will split her time between its Florida offices in Lakeland and Sebring.



Michele J. Lapayowker, D.O., FA-COOG ('90) recently relocated her gynecology

practice to Plantation, Florida. Dr. Lapayowker returned to South Florida in 1995 after completing her rotating internship at Doctor's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and graduating from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine's OB/GYN residency. Because she believes in giving back to the college, Dr. Lapayowker happily allows NSU-COM students to rotate through her practice.

Michelle R. Mendez, D.O. ('96) currently serves on the Florida Department of Health's Wholesale Drug Distribution Advisory Council.



Amber Nash, D.O. ('09) recently joined Borgess Women's Health in Portage,

Michigan. Dr. Nash, who completed her OB/GYN residency at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg, Florida, is a junior fellow of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.



Carlos Sanchez, D.O. ('94), who is board certified in emergency medicine,

serves as medical director of the North Shore Medical Center Emergency Department in Miami, Florida, and is the owner of Medistation Urgent Care in Miami Shores.



Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz, D.O. ('09) and **Camilo A. Ruiz, D.O.,**

FACOI ('07) were named Top Docs in Concierge Medicine across America by *Concierge Medicine Today* for 2014. In addition, Choice Physicians Sleep Center received a prestigious five-year accreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. The D.O. duo co-owns Choice Physicians of South Florida, which is located in east Fort Lauderdale.



Matthew Swartz, D.O. ('04), who served 10 years with the U.S. Navy before being

honorably discharged in 2011, joined the staff at Prairie Lakes Healthcare System in

Watertown, South Dakota, as a hospitalist. Prior to joining Prairie Lakes, Dr. Swartz was a hospitalist at Presbyterian Hospital in Matthew, North Carolina, and provided hospitalist coverage at hospitals in North Carolina as well as at Prairie Lakes.

Matt Stringer, D.O. ('10), who is a captain in the U.S. Air Force, traveled to Belize in May as part of his fourth-year urology residency training at the San Antonio Military Medical Center in Texas. During his time in Belize, Dr. Stringer served as a key component of a surgical team collaborating with urology medical providers at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital in Belize City that provided urology procedures and surgeries for a program called New Horizons Belize 2014.

Zaheed Tai, D.O. ('95), an interventional cardiologist, recently opened a medical practice in Davenport, Florida. Dr. Tai is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in cardiovascular disease, nuclear medicine, interventional cardiology, and internal medicine.



Adam Wiener, D.O., FAOCD ('03) was appointed chairman of dermatology for Holmes

Regional Medical Center in Melbourne, Florida, which is Brevard County's premier tertiary referral hospital.



Elise Zahn, D.O., M.B.A., FACOEP-D ('96) was named a Distinguished Fellow by the

American Osteopathic College of Emergency Physicians.



Dr. Panero (left) during his heartfelt reunion with Sullenberger.

Dr. Alberto Panero Reunites with *Miracle on the Hudson* Pilot at NSU Undergraduate Commencement Ceremonies

The date January 15, 2009, will forever be etched in the minds of Chesley B. (Sully) Sullenberger III and the 155 people whose lives he saved when he and his crew safely guided U.S. Airways Flight 1549 to an emergency water landing in New York City's frigid Hudson River.

As a result, the *Miracle on the Hudson* became a defining moment in history, with Sullenberger becoming an international hero. He has since dedicated his career to improving airline safety, but Sullenberger is not the only one who survived that fateful event to focus on saving and improving the lives of others.

Alberto Panero, D.O., a 2009 NSU-COM alumnus, was a passenger on

the Airbus A320 when the plane's engines lost thrust following a bird strike. At the time, Dr. Panero was a fourth-year NSU-COM student who used his medical training to assist injured passengers and help them safely exit the plane. Today, he is a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician in Sacramento, California, who is wholeheartedly devoted to helping patients recover from injuries.

Dr. Panero surprised Sullenberger at NSU's undergraduate commencement ceremonies on May 10 by introducing and thanking his hero for saving his life. "One thing I learned through the experience of being on that plane that day is that sometimes in life you will encounter individuals

that, even for the briefest of moments, have the ability to profoundly impact your life," said Dr. Panero, who had not seen Sullenberger since 2009.

"This would be the obvious understatement when referring to the brief yet undeniably powerful impact Captain Sullenberger has had on my life," he added. "Because of the gifted skills he had as a pilot, I am able to use the skills I developed through my education and training from Nova Southeastern University to directly impact lives."

When it came time for Sullenberger to speak, he joked, "Who knew that on January 15, 2009, there would be a shark in the Hudson River?" he said, referring to the NSU mascot as the crowd laughed and cheered.

Alumni Reunion Weekend Rekindles Relationships

On April 11-13, the college held its 17th Annual Alumni Reunion and CME Weekend, which kicked off with a welcome reception at the Museum of Art/Fort Lauderdale that allowed the 120 or so attendees to mingle on the second-floor patio and enjoy a moonlit evening of fun, food, and camaraderie.

The event offered a mix of activities, ranging from five hours of continuing medical education courses and an on-campus family picnic to a festive evening of dining and dancing aboard the Lady Windridge yacht as it navigated its way around the Intracoastal Waterway. During the cruise, the 170 attendees, which included alumni, faculty and staff members, and family and friends, honored and applauded the classes of 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009.

During the reunion weekend, the following officers were elected to the 2014-15 Alumni Association Executive Committee:

President: Annette Da Silva, D.O. ('96)

President Elect: William Stager, D.O. ('89)

Vice President: Donald Howard, D.O. ('89)

Secretary: Tyler Cymet, D.O. ('88)

Treasurer: Jack Goloff, D.O. ('85)

Immediate Past President: Andrew Gross, D.O. ('93)

Trustees at large for 2015 are Bruce Rankin, D.O. ('85) and Mayrene Hernandez, D.O. ('01). 2016 trustees are Jim Turner, D.O. ('88) and Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88), while 2017 trustees are Linda Delo, D.O. ('86) and Michael Gervasi, D.O. ('87).





*By Debra R. Gibbs, B.A.
Medical Communications Coordinator*

Portrait of the Power of Perseverance: Dr. Jennifer Wellington

Some of us know early in our lives the person we want to be. We choose our paths and forge ahead, demonstrating an amazing ability to strive and succeed. Jennifer Wellington, D.O., a class of 2014 graduate, is a fine example of that special individual who has a dream and perseveres to realize it.

Born in Des Moines, Iowa, Dr. Wellington grew up in South Florida with family members close by. Her loving grandparents sparked and nurtured her interest in health care. “I decided to become a doctor at the age of six,” she said. “My family isn’t full of doctors; in fact, my parents never finished college. My grandfather—a Cuban-Spanish trained surgeon—and my grandmother—a retired nurse—have been my guiding light, and it was my parents’ hard work and encouragement that helped shape me into who I am today.” After attending high school locally, she went to Florida Atlantic University (FAU), where the College of Biological Sciences pioneered a medical

externship program that allowed undergraduates to join physicians in the community to shadow and experience what it meant to practice medicine.

“I shadowed every kind of physician I could find and decided that medicine was what I was born to do,” she said. Meeting V. Alin Botoman, M.D., FACP, a gastroenterologist who has been her mentor for nine years, further encouraged her interests and skills toward a life in medicine. Dr. Wellington’s pursuit of many clinical research projects fed her fascination for the field of gastroenterology.

Once she completed her FAU education, Dr. Wellington followed an untraditional road to earn a spot in medical school. “After many unsuccessful attempts and unbelievable heartache, I was lucky enough to be accepted into the Master of Biomedical Sciences program at NSU—my last attempt at making my childhood dream of becoming a physician come true,” she said. The unique program allows students to take the first-year basic science curricu-

lum of medical school and matriculate into the upcoming medical class if the students have achieved 80 percent or higher in each class.

"The program gave me the tools I needed to master efficient study habits, hone my time-management skills, and build a strong foundation of medical knowledge necessary for success in medical school. Through the program, I've learned there's no limit to the amount of effort I will exercise to reach my goals," Dr. Wellington explained. "I'll never forget the day I got the phone call of acceptance. I've never been more excited in my life."

NSU-COM prides itself on a holistic practice of choosing candidates. The vetting process has led the college to accept students that may not have been selected anywhere else because it knows such candidates often make wonderful doctors—and that their experiences often build them into leaders who do great things. Dr. Wellington was one of those students. Her dedication to her dream of being a caring physician resulted in personal and professional rewards as she worked with her fellow students and members of the community.

As she triumphantly welcomed the demanding life of a medical student, Dr. Wellington also considered the importance of the personal side of



Dr. Wellington with her husband, Sausaun, at their 2012 wedding.

her life. "I met my husband Sausaun just before I began medical school," she said. "From our first few dates, it was clear to us that we were meant for each other. Halfway through medical school, we got married on the beach in a small, intimate ceremony. He's been through every step of this journey with me as my rock and greatest supporter."

Once Dr. Wellington joined her classmates at NSU-COM, she further developed her great passion for teaching and mentoring others—a tradition that started when she was an undergraduate. She flourished as a leader among her peers, participating in the traditional medical school activities of studying, publishing

her research, and attending medical conferences. She also served as an academical society peer mentor and tutor for her classmates and underclassmen. Her devotion to giving back to the community led her to serve as clinic coordinator for the student-run HIV testing clinic on campus—expanding the clinic's outreach to offer testing and HIV awareness at community centers and events throughout South Florida.

Logging more than 300 hours of community service, she won a TOUCH Community Service Award. After her induction into the Sigma Sigma Phi National Honorary Osteopathic Service Fraternity, Dr. Wellington redesigned COMPals—a program that brings undergraduate students from various universities to NSU to learn about the medical school curriculum, listen for sounds made by internal organs on the Harvey simulation device, and study cadaver specimens.

A few examples of recognition for her strong sense of purpose and social responsibility include membership in the Gold Humanism Honor Society and Psi Sigma Alpha National Osteopathic Scholastic Honor Society, being recognized as a Sigma Sigma Phi Grand Chapter physician member, winning the Leonard Tow 2014 Humanism in Medicine Award, receiving



During her time at NSU-COM, Dr. Wellington participated in the college's medical outreach trip to Jamaica.

the David Spector Addiction Medicine Award in research and education, and graduating in the top three percent of the NSU-COM class of 2014.

Through all the achievements, there was one thing Dr. Wellington missed—a little more time with her loving family. Even though she is from South Florida and has some family members close by, she managed “the challenge of trying to spend time with all of them while maintaining my focus on the rigorous requirements of my studies. I think fourth year was especially demanding, as I was away from home and my husband for six months while auditioning and interviewing for my residency—a common experience for fourth-year medical students across the nation,” she explained.

Her pride and appreciation in attaining her goal seem to outweigh any major regrets. Dr. Wellington warmly reflected on “the opportunity to be a part of many community outreach projects and work with incredible physicians, including, but not limited to, Samuel Snyder, D.O., FACP, FACOI, FASN, professor and chair of the Department of Internal Medicine,

David Boesler, D.O., assistant professor of osteopathic principles and practice, and former faculty member Robert Hasty, D.O., FACOI.

“Dr. Boesler worked with me on several outreach projects, many times staying late to teach college students about osteopathic manipulative medicine or to offer advice, stating ‘I’m always happy to help,’” she said. Such outstanding mentoring inspired Dr. Wellington to adopt Dr. Boesler’s *always happy to help* philosophy. “Because of his mentorship, I dedicated many hours to help others at NSU and in the wider community.”

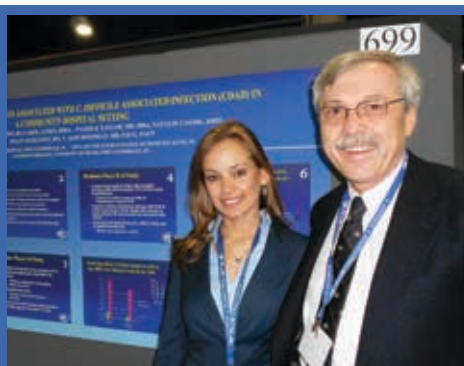
As Dr. Wellington envisioned her life in a new community beyond NSU-COM, she shared some advice for incoming students. “When I was a sophomore in college, I was fortunate to have a great mentor, Dr. Boman, who has helped me along the way to achieve my goals,” she said. “I decided to pay that forward by becoming a peer mentor at NSU-COM. I strongly urge new medical students to reach out to upperclassmen, ask questions, seek advice, and learn how to stay focused to achieve their goals. Medical school is definitely the most

challenging thing I’ve ever done, and having people around me to talk to really made a difference.”

Her optimistic tenacity targets a future in gastroenterology. “Ever since I was 15, I’ve wanted to become a gastroenterologist,” revealed Dr. Wellington, who said her favorite aspects of the profession are the complexity and variety of patients she will be treating. “I decided this while volunteering at a hospital near home, and I haven’t been able to change my mind.”

She realizes it’s pretty unusual to make such a focused career choice that young, but she has remained engrossed with the field’s many opportunities for research and discovery and plans to continue to train in hepatology. “When I was young and set my sights on becoming a physician, my grandfather told me that ‘It’s not the ship; it’s the sailor.’ In other words, no matter where life’s circumstances put you, the only thing that matters is what you do once you’re there.”

Dr. Wellington is proud to be an osteopathic physician, whose passion to envision and accomplish her dreams will no doubt continue to intensify—and make her a leader in her field.



Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

In the spring of 1999, NSU-COM launched an alumni-based fund-raising effort to generate dollars that would be used to create an endowment fund to reduce future tuition costs for NSU-COM students and produce a funding pool that would be utilized for discretionary purposes as determined by the Alumni Association Executive Committee. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the following list of donors; however, if you notice an error or omission, please contact **Lynne Cawley** in the Office of Alumni Affairs at **(954) 262-1029**.

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College of Osteopathic Medicine
3200 South University Drive
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328-2018

Calendar of Events

August 10, 2014

Class of 2018 White Coat Ceremony

10:00 a.m. – NSU Don Taft University Center in Davie, Florida

September 18-21, 2014

FOMA Mid-Year Seminar

Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay in Tampa, Florida

October 25-29, 2014

OMED/AOA Osteopathic Medical Conference and Exposition

Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, Washington

Alumni Reception on October 27 at the Seattle Aquarium – 6:30-9:00 p.m.